4

FAMILY ORGANIZATION AND DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES

After the descent *koottam,* it is the family which forms the basic and most significant unit of social organization among the Mudugas It is the family which always takes the form of a household in terms of residence However, anthropologists have defined family in terms of kinship relations and household ın terms of residence and domestic activities [1] According to thıs, ın certain cases, households may be made up of individuals between whom no primary kın relationship exist, and conversely members of one family may be distributed over two or more households Thus ın the case of household, ıt seems more important to understand the activities that are central to the domestic relationship, rather than wıth the relationship between members as ın the family [2]

However, we may not find these units operating distinctly ın many of the simple societies [3] Similarly among the Mudugas also families constitute households (residential units) and perform some set of activities – food production, consumption, sexual reproduction and child rearing(domestic activities) Since members of a family constitute one household and function as one domestic unit, these concepts are used synonymously These aspects of composition and activities associated wıth the Muduga family and household and ıts de\ elopment cycle wıll be dealt ın thıs chapter

The Mudugas ha\ e no special term as such to refer to the family However, the word *kudumbam* ıs used, which refers to family as well as to closely related agnates when used ın a broader sense But the) often use the term *koorai* which implies both the family and the household [4] *Koorai* gets ıts meaning depending on the context ın which ıt ıs used The word *koorai* has the meaning family or household and at the same ıt also refers to the dwelling or hut and further implies that every household wıll be ın a separate hut or dwelling When one refers to hıs family members, he would say "*ennu koorakarar*" Here the term acquires the meaning of a family. If one invites to hıs hut, he would say, *ennu koorakku bame* (come to my hut) Here the term denotes the dwelling or the hut

Thus in general use, *kooiat* refers to the household members who live in a single hut, sharing a common cooking hearth, who pool their income and living expenses and co-operate in domestic activities

There is of course a considerable amount of variation the way in which the *koorai* is constituted and it is necessary to distinguish between the domestic aspects and the residential aspects to account for the variation If division occurs in an household due to the marriage of a son, the new family may function as a separate domestic unit or household in a newly erected hut with their independent hearth, cooking and eating Suppose, if this new couple even after marriage stays along with other members of his parents family in the same hut, they will remain as part of that domestic unit or household with a common hearth and cooking Thus a single hut or dwelling never consists of more than one household or domestic unit and as long as members reside together under one hut, they form a single domestic unit cooking and eatmg together But when a single hut cannot accommodate all the members of the household, especially at the initial phase of the marriage of children, they sleep in separate huts but functioning as a single domestic unit Even if they dwell in separate huts, they will not establish their hearth and function as an independent cooking unit, but, will be eating with and cooking with the parents domestic unit in a common hearth [5] In such cases, they will be identified as a single household or domestic unit, cooking and dining together Thus among the Mudugas, even if two separate huts share a common cooking hearth or work as a single commensal unit, will be referred to as a single '*koorai*'only

Among the Mudugas, the simplest form of household representing a domestic and procreative unit is the nuclear family constituting a man, his wife and children, residing in a single hut This nuclear family constitutes a single economic unit and its members are mutually dependent on one another for the production and consumption of food and satisfaction of other needs

Though the ideal composition of a household is the nuclear family, households in certain cases include persons outside the nuclear family also However, the membership to a household or a domestic unit will be strictly based on the degree of closeness to either spouse and thus restricted to close kin of either husband or wife Hence, among the Mudugas persons who are distant relatives will rarely form members of the same

domestic unit The composition of Muduga domestic group shows that far from being randomly composed, these groups tend in the great majority of cases to contain persons related in only a comparatively few ways through kinship and marriage Persons related in certain ways only become members of the same domestic unit and persons related in any way cannot become members of the same household Thus persons beyond the level of primary kin of either the husband or wife rarely become members of that unit In very rare cases only distant relatives (1 e , secondary or tertiary km) of the members constituting the nuclear family are attached to the household Thus in one case at Thaze-Kakkupadi hamlet, Chatan's household, other than his wife and children includes his FZ Chathi, Chathi's widowed daughter Jakki and her children, and Chathi's eldest daughter's daughter, who are not primary km to any member of Chatan's nuclear family (see Fig 41)

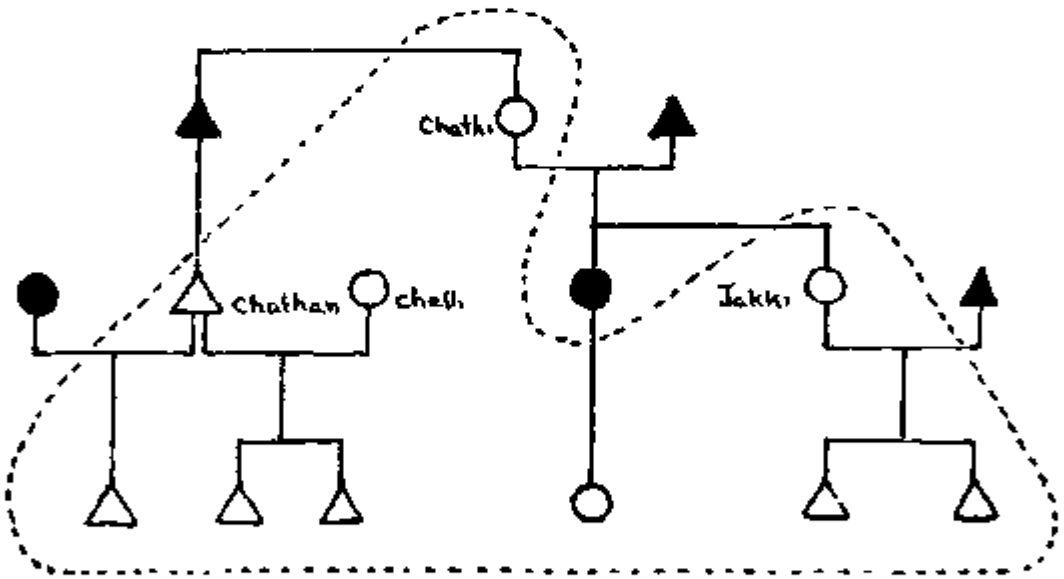

Fig 4 1 Genealogical composition of Chathan's family

Statistics shows that out of the total of 959 persons in the sample, 58 persons (11 males and 47 females) are either widowed or separated. From **Table 4 1 it is evident that** out of the 47 separated / widowed females, 17 are attached to the households of their sons and 15 are attached to their daughters Among the remaining separated / widowed females six are dependent to their brother's, six to their parent's household, six to their parents, two to their brother's and one to MBS' household When compared to females, the number of male persons who are separated / widowed is very less i e , 11 in number Out of this 11 separated / widowed persons, 5 are attached to the households of their sisters and one each to their brother's, parent's and unmarried children's households The less number of separated or widowed males is due to the fact that they remarry much faster than females Women after separating from her husband usually seek shelter along with her father or brother or stay with her grown up children She will opt for remarriage only after some period of time, and that too if she is in her young age But for a man, he usually go for another union much earlier, since he needs to look after the children and more over without the co-operation of a woman, he cannot have a fully functioning household or a domestic unit Only men who are very old will keep away from remarriage

Table 4 1 Widowed / Separated persons attached to household of Kin

	Relation with members of the attached household							
	B	Z	S	D	F/M	UM children	BS	MBS
Females	6	-	17	15	6	-	2	1
Males	1	3	5	-	1	1	-	-

All the members of the household who are part of the domestic unit, irrespective of sex and age, take part in subsistence activities They work together, enter in mutual

assistance, and share the benefits of their joint effort. Among the Mudugas, the simplest composition of an household to function as a domestic unit should consists of two abled members - a male and a female, capable enough to take full responsibility of managing the household affairs Nevertheless, more than one married couple rarely form part of one domestic unit Once married, the couple tend to establish their independent domestic unit separately in a newly erected hut Though he stays with his parents in the early stages of his marriage, later he establishes his own independent household nearby his father's There are cases where sons even after marriage remain with their parents as part of their domestic unit for quite sometime giving rise to a lineal joint family type till they establish their own independent household If the hut is very small, this newly married couple may be sleeping in a separate hut but regarding cooking, eating and other domestic activities, they function together as one unit Kakki's son Raju of Thaze-Abbannoor after marrying Vellachi's daughter Mathi from the same hamlet continued as a part of his parent's domestic unit contributing their labour in the domestic activities, cooking and eating together But later, the new couple shifted to a nearby hut mainly for sleepmg in the night time However, they continued as integral part of their parent's domestic unit cooking and eating together and thus forming a single commensal unit.

Among the Mudugas, though a typical household is of the nuclear family type, other forms of households such as the joint family type also do occur, but in rare cases The term joint family is used to refer to a group of two or more nuclear families joined lineally by father-son bond or fraternally by the sibling bond The former is called the lineal joint family and the latter the collateral joint family A combined lineal — collateral joint family would be based on both the above forms constituting man, wife, married children along with their spouse and children In some cases a widowed mother or sister may join a nuclear family giving rise to a paternal extended nuclear family type And in yet other cases, a widowed sister with her children attached to the nuclear family of a brother give nse to a bilaterally dependent nuclear family

This attachment of relatives to a nuclear family unit is primarily based on the degree of closeness, and relatives beyond the primary kin level of either the husband or wife of the nuclear family rarely become members of the same household or domestic group More distant kin may occasionally be accommodated, but they remain attached for

a short period and later gets separated erecting a new hut and forming their own independent domestic unit Usually these dependent relatives are attached by primary link through either husband or wife, and no distinction as such is made between husband's and wife relative

Another important feature of the Muduga domestic organization is that a parent and child are mutually obliged to help each other subsist when either needs help If the child is too young or the parent is too old, he or she must be supported as a dependent by the other Thus ideally among the Mudugas a person should belong to a domestic unit including his / her spouse, parents or children However there are cases, though rare, where people deviate from this ideal pattern and attach to the domestic group of persons other than his / her spouse, parents or children The reason as to why these persons are not members of the same domestic group as their parents or spouse is mainly due to the death of the parents or spouse or separation from the spouse or parents

Table of 4 2 shows that out of the total 959 persons in the sample, 39 persons who are either unmarried, separated or widowed are attached to households not including either a parent, child or spouse Out of these 39 persons, 7 males and 8 females are attached to their brothers households and 8 males and 2 females are attached to their ZH household The rest of the members are attached to the households of BS, MBS, ZH, MZ etc There are no instances of a widower or separated person getting attached to the domestic group of his WB This is because there is no primary kin for him in the domestic unit unlike in a ZH' household where his sister is a primary kin

Table - 4 2 Members attached to households of other than parent, Spouse or Children

Relation with the head of the household

	B	ZH	BS	MBS	MB	MZH	FB	MMBS	MM	FZH
Males	7	8	-	-	2	1	1		1 -	1
Famales	8	2	2	1	1	-	-	2	2 -	-

Types of families / households :

The different types of households based on genealogical composition present among the Mudugas of Attappady where household survey is done is shown in Table 4 3 The type of households include nuclear, lineal joint, collateral joint, hneal-collateral joint and various extended forms of the above mentioned households [6]

1 Nuclear family This type of family consist of a man, his wife with dependant children A nuclear family evolves with the birth of a child for a married couple Out of a total of 191 households from the sample, 92 i e , 48.16% are composed of nuclear families

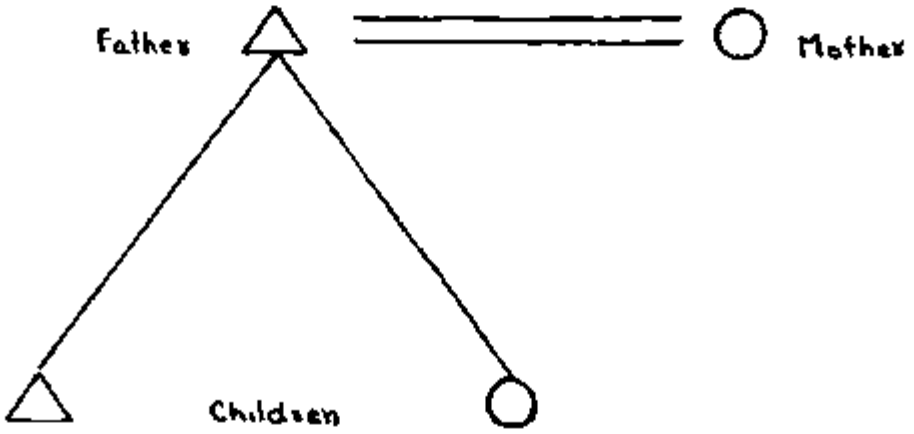

Fig 4 2 Structure of relationship in nuclear family

2 Incomplete family (two member family) :_This type of family consist of a man and his wife without children Usually it comes into existence with the marriage of a man with a woman as they establish a separate household. There are as many as fifteen incomplete families in the total sample

3 Broken family A broken family comes into existence with the death, divorce or separation of either the husband or wife in a nuclear family Among the Mudugas, **out** of the total sample of 191 households, 5 (i e , 2 61%) are composed of broken families

4 **Compound family** This type of family comes in to existence also when widows or divorcees with children from a previous marriage remarry and beget children through the second union The composition of a compound family is similar to that of a nuclear family consisting of a man, his wife and dependent children But it differs from nuclear family in that it is formed through the amalgamation of nuclear family units or parts of them with children belonging to different parents For instance, Kakkılınkan at Thaze-Abbannor had first married Jakki of Kurukathikallu hamlet, and in that union he begot three children After the death of Jakki, Kakkılınkan married Vellachi who was a widow and already having a son in her first husband Kakkilmkan is having a son in Vellachi Now his household includes his first wife's and his wife's first husband's children apart from the child in the union between Kakkilmkan and his present wife (see fig 4 3) Out of the total sample, compound families are 3 in number constituting about 1 57 %

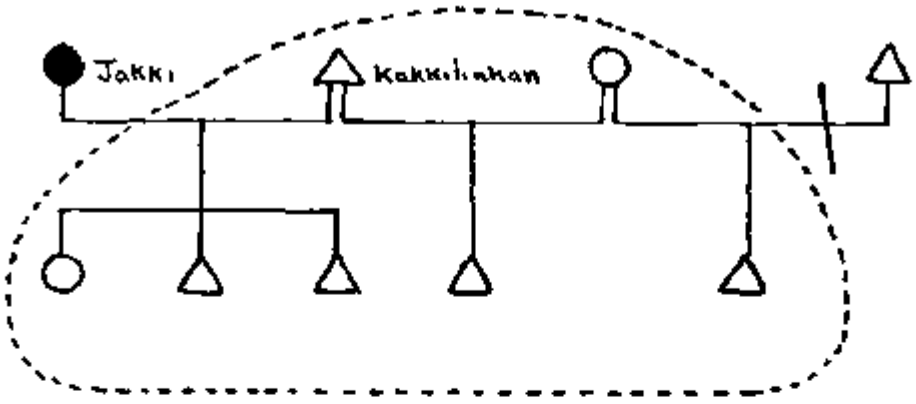

Fig 4 3 Composition of Kakkılınkan's family

5. Single member family : As the name indicates, this type consists of only one person, male or female, married, widowed or separated who must have been an husband / father, wife / mother or son / daughter in a nuclear family. There are only 3 cases of single member families in the total sample

Joint family . A family is characterized as a joint family when it includes more than one nuclear family unit joined lineally or laterally by common consanguineal bonds.

1 **Lineal Joint family** This type of family consist of the nuclear family units of two or more lineally related persons, their spouses and children Lineal joint families are usually composed of a couple, their unmamed children along with married sons their spouse and children Rangan's household m Anakkal Rangan's household represents a typical lineal joint household type (see fig 4 4) - Rangan's household consist of his wife, his son, son's wife, and children along with Rangan's unmarried daughter Lineal joint families are also formed when parents alone join with the nuclear family unit of their son In rare cases a couple with a daughter retained for uxonlocal residence with her husband and children also constitute a lineal joint family There are only three such cases in the entire sample, one from Thaze-Abannoor and the other two cases from Mele-Kakkupadi hamlet The total number of lineal joint households are nineteen and forms around 9 94 % of the sample

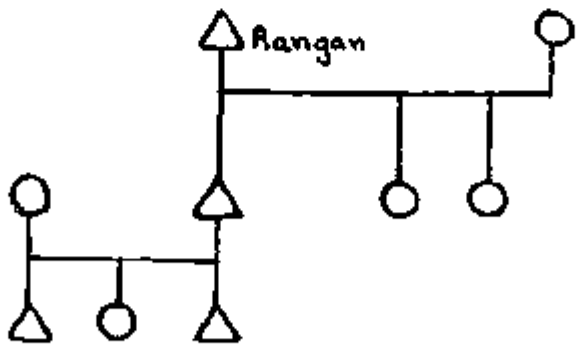

Fig 4.3 Genealogical composition of Rangan's family

2 **Collateral joint family** This type of joint family consists of nuclear family units of two or more brothers with their spouses and dependent children There are no cases of collateral joint family in the total sample of 191 households among the Mudugas of Attappady

3 **Lineal-collateral joint family** This type of joint family is composed of more than two nuclear family units joined both lineally and laterally Typically this comprises of nuclear family of parents along with the nuclear families of two or more sons Only one such lineal-collateral joint family is found among the Mudugas of Attappady i e, Mallan's family at Veetiyoor

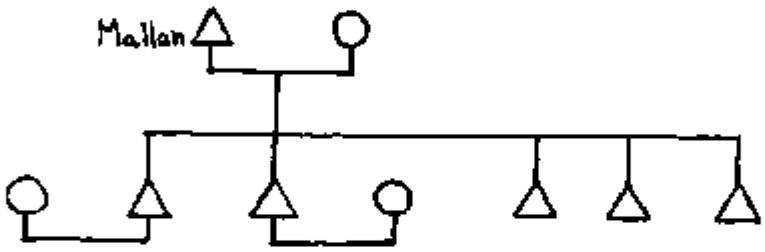

Fig 4 5 Genealogical composition of Mallan's family

4 Bilateral joint family This type of joint family consists of nuclear family units of opposite sex siblings Typically this family comprises of a brother and a sister only along with their spouses and dependent children Only one such bilateral joint family is found in Attappady

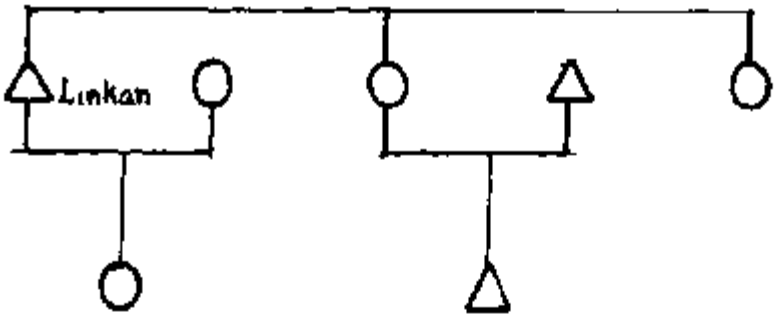

Fig 4 6 Genealogical composition of Linkan's bilateral joint family

5 **Lineal-bilateral joint family** This type of joint family is composed of more than two nuclear family units joined lmeally and lateially through opposite sex sibling link Typically this family comprises of parents along with the nuclear families of their son and daughter/ There are two cases of lineal-bilateral joint families in Attappady Thus in one case at Thaze-Abbannoor, Panali's household consist of his wife and unmarried children along with his mamed son and daughter with their spouse and children mabng it a lineal-bilateral joint family

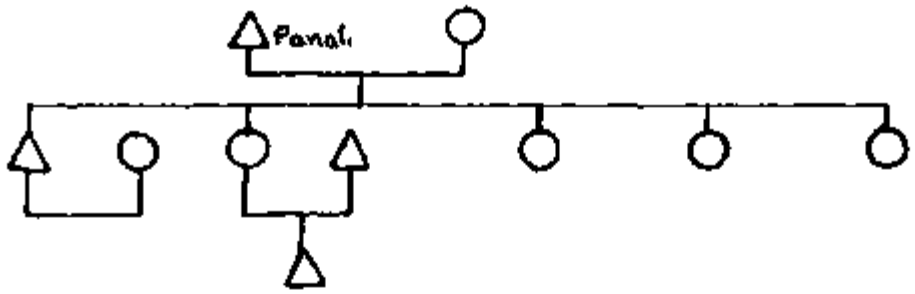

Fig 4 7 Genealogical composition of Panali's family

Dependent family This type of family is formed due to the addition of one or more dependent unmarried, widowed or separated kinsmen to any nuclear family or joint family types Hence these type of families are different forms of nuclear or joint family types through the addition of lineal or collateral dependents

1 **Nuclear family with lineal dependents** This type of family comes into existence when the parents in a lineal joint family becomes widowed or separated This family consist of a man with his wife and children along with a widowed / separated parent and unmarried siblings A nuclear family unit with an addition of widowed or separated parents also gives rise to the above family type There are 20 cases of nuclear family with lineal dependents in the total sample

2 **Nuclear family with collateral dependents** This type consist of a nuclear family unit of a man with an addition of unmarried or widowed brother with or without children There are 4 cases of nuclear family with collateral dependent type in the total sample of 191 households

3 **Nuclear family with bilateral dependents** This type of family comes into existence when an unmarried separated or widowed person with or without children is attached to the nuclear family unit of his / her opposite-sex sibling Out of the total sample of 191 households, there are 7 cases of bilateral extended nuclear family Thus at Mele-Abbannoor hamlet, Krishnan's household consist of his wife and children along with his widowed sister making it a bilaterally dependent family type.

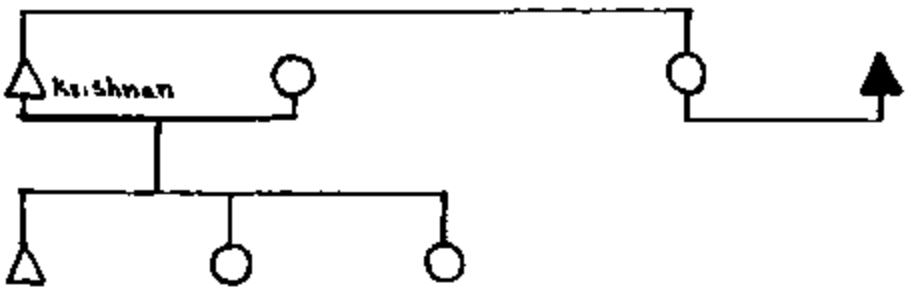

Fig 4 8 Genealogical composition of Krishnan's family

4 Nuclear family with lineal and collateral dependents This type of family consists of the nuclear family of a man with an addition of a widowed / separated parent along with a widowed / separated brother with or without children This type of family is represented by only one case in the entire sample At Thaze-Abbannoor hamlet, Kali's household consist of his wife and children, widowed father Ooshi, along with his widowed brother Velli and his children making it a nuclear family with lineal and collateral dependent type

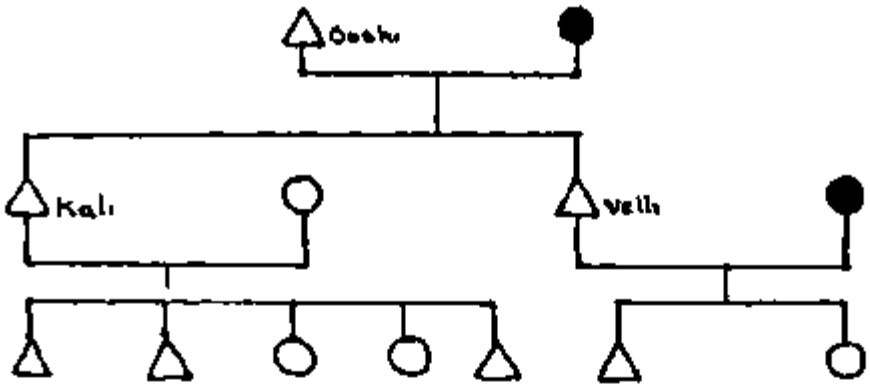

Fig 4 9 Genealogical composition of Kali's family

5 Nuclear family with lineal and bilateral dependents This type of family consists of the nuclear family of a man with an addition of a widowed / separated parent along with a widowed / separated sister with or without children This type of family is represented by only one case in the entire sample At Thaze-Abbannoor, Kullan's household consist of his wife and children, widowed mother along with his separated sister giving rise to a nuclear family with lineal and bilateral dependent type

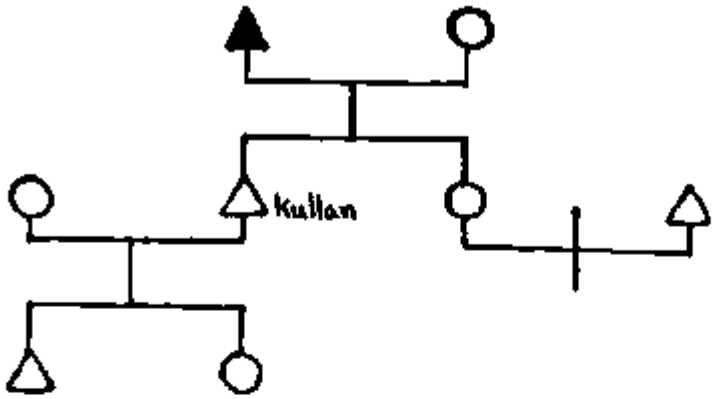

Fig 4 10 Genealogical composition of Kullan's family

7 **Collateral joint family with lineal dependents** This type of family consists of a collateral joint family with an addition of **a** widowed or separated parent In the total sample, there is only one case of collateral joint family with lineal dependents Thus at Pottikal hamlet, Gopi's household consists of his wife, his younger brother and wife, along with their widowed father making it **a** joint family of the above type

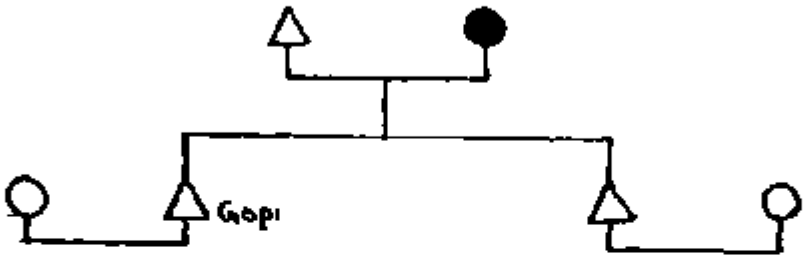

Fig 4 11 Genealogical composition of Gopi's family

6 Bilateral joint family with lineal dependents This type of family consist of a joint family composed of the nuclear families of a brother and a sister along with their widowed or separated parents and unmarried siblings This family type is represented by only one case in the total sample At Mele-Kakkupadi, Rangan's household consist of his wife, and his sister's nuclear family unit along with his widowed mother, widowed sister and unmarried brother

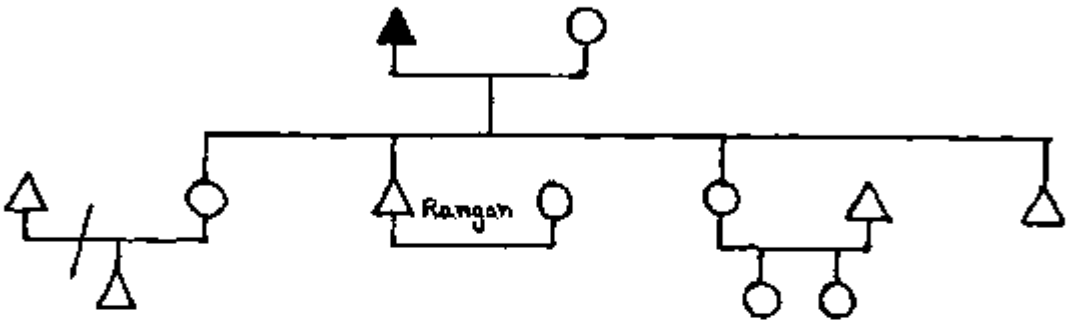

Fig 4 12 Genealogical composition of Rangan's family

7 Compound family with lineal dependents This type of family is formed when a widowed or separated parent is attached to a compound family There is only one case representing this type in the total sample

Broken families .

1 Broken family with bilateral dependents This type of family is composed of a broken nuclear family unit with an addition of an unmarried, separated or widowed opposite-sex sibling of either spouse with or without children Usually this type comprises of a widowed man and his children along with his unmamed or widowed sister This type is represented only by one case in the sample

2 **Broken lineal joint family** This type of family is composed of the nuclear unit of the parents (with unmarried children) and an addition of widowed / separated son / daughter with or without children A broken lineal joint family is usually formed when in a lineal joint family, the married son or the daughter becomes widowed or separated There are four such cases of broken lineal joint family in the sample Thus at Mele-Abbannoor, Chekidan's household consists of his wife and unmamed children along with his widowed daughter giving rise to a broken lineal joint family type

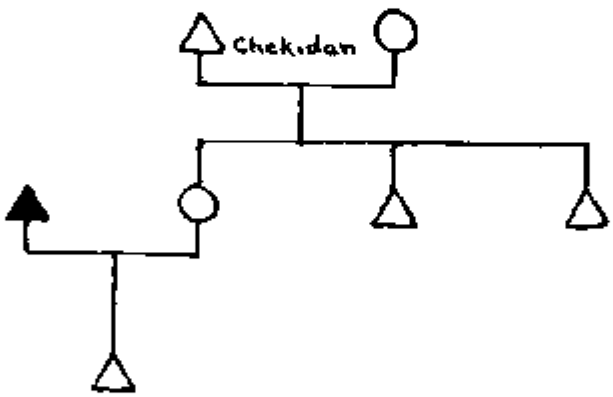

Fig 4 13 Genealogical composition of Chekidan's family

5 Broken family with lineal dependents This type of family is composed of a widowed or separated parent (with unmarried children) attached to the broken family unit of their married son or daughter There are four cases of lineal extended broken families in the total sample In one case at Thaze-Abbannoor, Mathan was staying along with his wife Chelli and children constituting a nuclear family But the death of Mathan made the nuclear family to fall into the type of a broken nuclear family Further later, Chelli's mother and Chelh's younger brother who were staying in a separate household shifted their stay along with Chelh's household giving it the form of a lineally dependent broken family type (see fig 4 14)

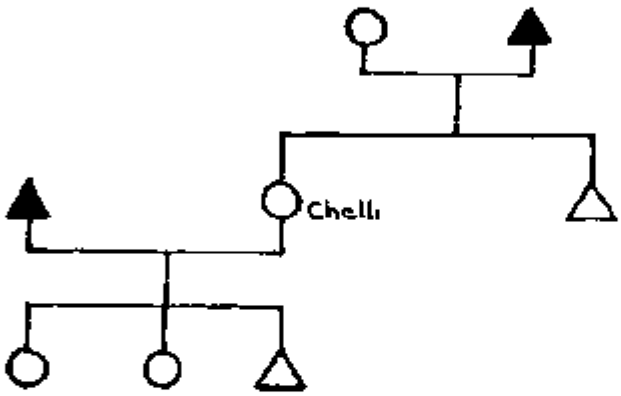

Fig 4 14 Genealogical composition of Chelh's family

In another case, Chathi of Mele-Abbannoor hamlet was married by Kakki of Thaze-Abbannor But later when Kakki divorced Chathi, she went back to Mele-Abbannoor and stayed along with her widowed mother giving nse to a broken family with lineal dependent type

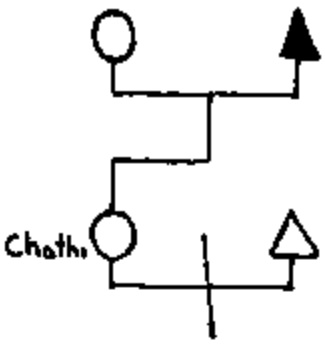

Fig 4 15 Genealogical composition of Chathi's family

6 **Broken lineal joint family with bilateral dependents** This type of family consist of a man and his wife along with the broken nuclear family unit of his son/daughter and an addition of a widowed opposite-sex sibling of either the husband or wife This type is represented by only one case in the entire sample Thus at Cholakkadu hamlet, Man's household consist of his wife, separated daughter and also his wife's widowed brother, making it a broken lineal joint family with bilateral dependent type

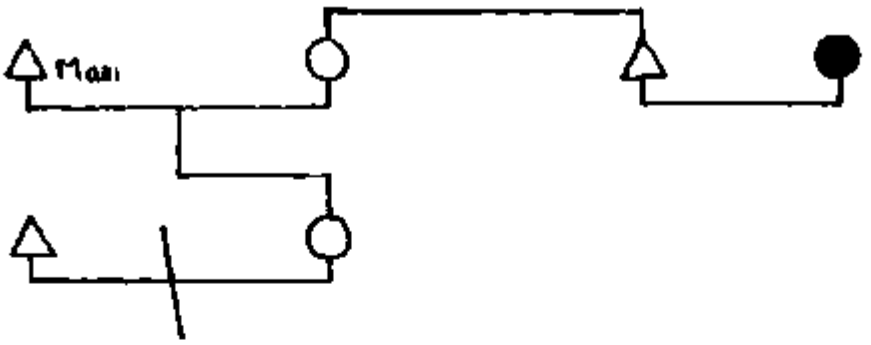

Fig 4 16 Genealogical composition of Man's family

Families with secondary dependents This type of family is formed when one or more unmarried, widowed, or separated relatives belonging to none of the constituent nuclear families are attached to the main unit

1 Nuclear family with secondary dependents This type of family consist of a man, his wife and children plus one or more extra unmarried, divorced or widowed relatives w ho are not members of the constituent nuclear family or spouses of the members There are three such cases of supplementary nuclear family in the total sample At Thaze-Abbannoor, Chekidan moopan's household consists of his wife and children along with his classificatory father's sister

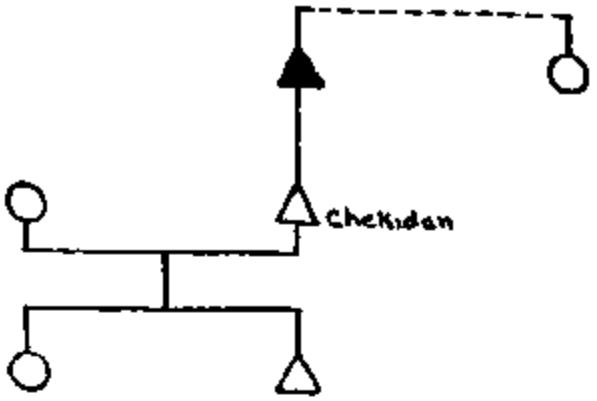

Fig 4 17 Genealogical composition of Chekidan moopan's family

2 **Incomplete family with secondary dependents** This type of family consist of an husband and a wife with an addition of unmarried, widowed or separated relative who are not members or spouses of the members of the constituent family There is only one case of supplementary incomplete family in the sample At Thaze-Abbannoor, the household of Chonke compnses of his second wife along with his wife's daughter's daughters giving rise to an incomplete family with secondary dependent type

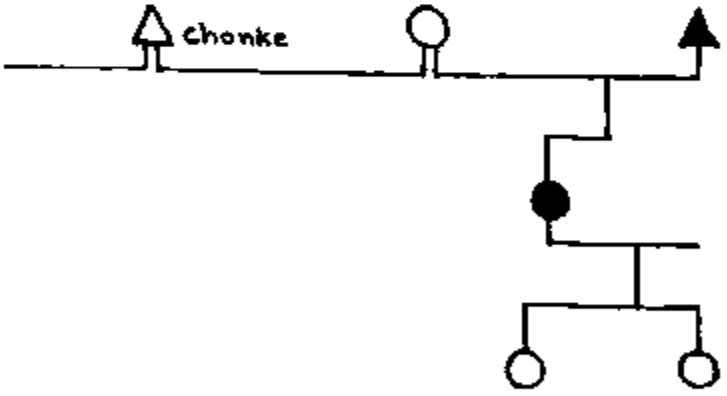

Fig 4 18 Genealogical composition of Chonke's family

Table 4,3 Genealogical composition of households

Sl No	Type of family	No. of households	Percentage
01.	Nuclear family	92	48 16
02	Incomplete family	15	7 85
03	Broken family	5	2.61
04	Compound family	3	1.57
05	Single member family	3	1.57
II.	JOINT FAMILY		
01	Lineal joint family a) Vinlocal	15	7 85
	b) Uxonlocal	4	2 09
02	Collateral joint family		
03	Lıneal-collateral joint family	1	0 52
04	Bilateral joint family	1	0 52
05	Lıneal-bilateral joint family	2	1 04
III.	DEPENDENT FAMILY		
01	Nuclear family with lineal dependents	20	10 47
02	Nuclear family with collateral dependents	4	2.09
04	Nuclear family bilateral dependents	6	3.14
05	Nuclear family with lineal and collateral dependents family	1	0 52
06	Nuclear family with lineal and bilateral dependents	1	0.52
07	Collateral joint family with lineal dependents	1	0 52
08	Bilateral joint family with lineal dependents	1	0 52
09	Compound family with lineal dependents	1	0 52
11	Broken family with lineal dependents	5	2 61
12	Broken family with bilateral dependents	1	0 52
13	Broken lineal joint family	4	2 09
14	Broken lineal joint family with bilateral dependents	1	0 52
IV.	FAMILY WITH SECONDARY DEPENDENTS		
01	Nuclear family with secondary dependents	3	1 57
02	Incomplete family with secondary dependents	1	0 52
	Total	191	100

There is a considerable variation in the numerical size of the household depending on the type of family A Muduga family size vanes from a single member family to the maximum size of 17 members, the average size of a Muduga family being 5 01 persons Although nuclear family is the single predominant family type, a large majority of families have 5 and more persons (see Table 4 4)

Table 4 4 Numerical composition of domestic groups

Total No of persons per household	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	-	17
Frequency (No of households)	3	17	30	33	34	35	13	11	8	4	1	-	1

Various social and other ecological factors permit related households to come together and function as a single domestic unit But after a considerable period of time, they break and form independent units The process of fusion and fission of households are observed in certain cases among the Mudugas which makes an household pass through various stages of growth and de\ elopment

Murugan's household at Thaze-Abbannoor is an example Kakki's son Murugan after his marnage was staying in a separate hut nearby his father's and elder brother Bokken's hut Murugan's household maintained close relation between Kakki's and Bokken's *koorai* Later, due to a quarrel with his father, Murugan shifted his residence near to his wife's father Nanjan's hut But after one year, Murugan's brother Bokken forced him to come back and reside nearby his hut But in 1995 due to heavy rain and storm, Murugan's hut got damaged and he once again shifted his residence near his wife's father Nanjan's hut This time Murugan stayed for some time in the hut of his WMM Regi (situated very near to Nanjan's hut), who had then shifted to her son Velli's hut Later, Murugan's family shifted their stay to Nanjan's hut to stay along with Nanjan's family At this time, Murugan's wife's brother Rangan and his wife was also staying nearby Nanjan's hut and all the three families formed one domestic unit, and cooking was done together in Nanjan's *koorai*

During May 1996, Nanjan and his family shifted to his farm land and after two weeks his son Rangan also changed his residence to the field and erected his hut adjacent to his father's and both the family functioned as a single domestic unit.

Later Murugan's mother Chathi (who was staying at Mele-Abbannoor with her mother after being divorced by her husband kakki), due to quarrel with her mother, came and stayed along with her son After that, during 1996 August, Murugan his wife and children along with Chathi shifted their hut to Murugan's farm land and were staying together But in the month of December, Chathi shifted her stay from Murugan's hut to her younger sister Ponni's household at Mele-Abbannoor This time, Murugan, his wife and children alone were staying in the hut Still later, in the month of February 1997 when harvest was over, households of Nanjan, Murugan and Rangan shifted back to the hamlet and started staying together functioning as a single domestic unit

In another case, Chelli, the widow of Mathan and her children along with her mother and younger brother were staying together in a single homestead adjacent to Chelli's brother Chellan's homestead Though these two homesteads functioned as two independent domestic unit, a lot of co-operation in labour and exchange of food were taking place between these two *koorai* In the month of July 1996, Chellan's younger sister kade and her husband Sivalinkan who were staying along with Sivalinkan's parents, shifted their stay to Chellan's hut due to frequent quarrel between kade and her mother-in-law Later in August 1996, all the members of these two households including Kade and her husband, shifted their residence to a single hut erected m the farm land cooking and eating together functioning as a single domestic unit But later in the month of November, they abandoned this hut, and Chelli, Chellan and Sivahnkan erected their separate huts nearby in their farm land itself Chelli's widowed mother and younger brother is also staying along with Chelh's household Though they have separated into three households, these three units maintain very close interaction, economic co-operation and exchange of food w ith each other (see fig 4.19)

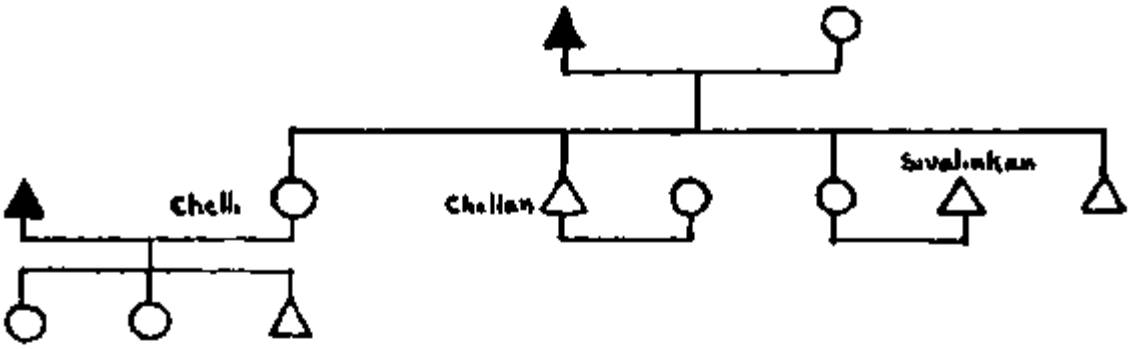

Fig 4 19 Joint household of Chelli, Chellan and Sivahnkan

The basic feature of nuclear family household among the Mudugas is the existence of a principal earning member in the household who supports other members, i e , his wife and children, and consequently holds authority over his dependents In a nuclear family, the husband-wife relationship is the basic and the determining factor and along with it is present that of parent–child relationship giving rise to two sets of obligation and co-operation in the household In a domestic unit consisting of a single nuclear family there is the co–operation of husband and wife in almost all domestic activities They must form mutually depended members of the same domestic unit Unless they are members of the same domestic unit and extend mutual co–operation and share their labour, they never fulfill the responsibilities of a husband and a wife

Family is the fundamental social group of the Mudugas and have the supreme place of importance in the life of every individual It is impossible for a man to lead a social life apart from the family of which he is a member It affects his life at every point and manages his relations with the outside world A person who does not belong to a family has no existence, because the society always identifies a man with his family

Mudugas are patnhneal and patnlocal in nature After marriage, the wife comes and lives with her husband Even though a daughter after marriage ceases to be the member of her father's family, she maintains relationship with her parents and at times

visits her natal hamlet Since descent in the family passes along the line of the male offspring, children are identified with the family line of their fathers and property especially farmland, is inherited patrilineally Women virtually do not hold any right in the property of the family However, when in need, women seek shelter in their natal land with their father and brother, and in certain cases they are also permitted to use a portion of their father's farm land (This aspect of land use has been discussed in the previous chapter)

The family may be looked upon as a configuration of persons bound together by agnatic and affinal ties Members enjoy different kinship status such as those of grand-father, grand-mother, father, mother, mother-in-law, father–in–law, daughter-in-law, son–in–law, son, daughter etc Both male and female members perform multiple roles, assume various responsibilities and discharge duties and functions accordingly The family discharges a large number of social, economic, cultural, biological and other functions for the well being of its members Sense of solidarity, mutual co-operation and understanding, respect for age and value for kinship among the members signify the attnbutes of the family Family ensures protection for the weak, particularly widows and provides support for the old

All family or households have a recognized head, who represents the household in all dealings with formal affairs of the hamlet When the household is constituted by a nuclear family, the senior male will be the head Only when there are no adult male members in the household, is a woman regarded as the head of an household Howe\ er, it is to be emphasized here that, among the Mudugas, with respect to decisions in the domestic and familial domain, men and women are considered equal, and decision regarding production and consumption and other social matters are shared by the spouses

Authority over the children lies with the father and his relations with children are characterized by respect and distance, whereas relations with the mother is characterized by warmth and closeness The care of small children is the responsibility of the mother, and it is she who feeds and supports her children until they are old enough Till 10-12 years of age both boys and girls interact and behave freely with parents. But after adolescence, a girl will be more attached to her mother and a boy with his father Daughters grow up under the direction of their mothers Mother and elder sisters train the

younger girls for the household tasks and give moral advice in worldly affairs The father takes little interest in the affairs of his daughter His chief concern with them is to ensure that they are well married Boys come directly under their father's guidance It is from his father, elder brothers and elder cousins, that a boy learns to hunt, make traps, fish, prepare fields, and engage m other activities of a man

The patrilineal ideology to a great extent decides the bond between parents and children The bond between the parents and sons remain longer than that of parents and daughters, because the parents in their old age expect care and support from the sons rather than from daughters who reside virilocally with their husbands in their conjugal household For a man, smce there is no change in the residence, there is a continuity in the process of shift from family of orientation to family of procreation Thus, he will be having a circle of close relatives, either father, or brother or even sons But in the case of a woman, she is entirely new to the situation and she has to build up her relation in order to become part of the already existing network of relationship in that particular hamlet She attains this by allying herself most closely with her husband and extending or establishing relationship through him

Mudugas often observe that father's sister (FZ) and brother's daughter (BD) in cross - cousin marriages tend to have more harmonious relationships Thus they prefer to marry cross - cousins saying "*swantham irunthal barmaka, mamene mamine nalamai noduve*",meaning that if the girl is own niece. then the parents-in-law will be well taken care by the daughter-in-law It is seen that in the case of cross — cousin marriages, mother-in- law and daughter- in-law get along well, and manage to share responsibilities without much conflict Marriages with relatives h\mg in the same hamlet leads to a great intimacy and interaction between the two households and these members are equally treated in both the households and get food and help from both the houses

When the family becomes so large that the household can no longer provide room for everybody, usually a nuclear family unit splits off Thus the eldest son will establish his own independent household nearby his father's household However, such separated family keeps close contact with the parent family The youngest son normally remains with his parents after his marriage Smce kinship ties persist even after co-residence is dissolved, the nghts and duties that characterize the relationships between the members of

ihe nuclear family are not altered by the separation of families into independent units These remain more or less the same whether the members comprise a single domestic group or whether they are separated into different domestic groups

Usually a man establishes his own household during his father's hfe-time He establishes hıs household nearby hıs father's ın the same hamlet Although he himself ıs a household head, he wıll still defer to hıs father, assist hım wıth labor and support and consult hım ın important matters So long as father and son reside ın the same hamlet, they continue to participate ın the same farmland, and the father continues to hold authority and control over hıs son The authority exercised by the father on the son and the respect shown ın return by the son towards the father ıs expressed through the formal relationship between a father and a son Since land ıs very much abundant, and any one capable of doing work can clear hıs plot of land and do hıs separate cultivation, there ıs no demand for family members sticking on to one maın property alone Matured boys capable of doing work, even before marriage, while along wıth their father's family, clear separate land and do their independent cultivation However, he ıs responsible to provıde help and co-operate wıth hıs parents ın their economic activities Hence ıt ıs not at all difficult for a son ın separating from the domestic unıt of hıs father immediately after hıs marriage He need not ask for any share ın the property because there ıs no much individual ownership of such land property

Even ıf they establish an independent domestic unıt, at tıme of need, they can unite \\ ıth the parent's group for a period as they lıke But people or members living under same roof or one *koorat* wıll be having only one kitchen and cooking wıll be done togethei ın one hearth There are no cases of more than one cooking unıt ın one *koorat* However, family members though dwelling ın separate huts co-operate ın most of their activities cooking and eating ın the same hearth and thus functioning as a single domestic unıt Thus they say, "*emma bere koorel analum, adıshı vanthu ontuthe*"(though we reside ın separate huts, cooking and eating ıs done together)

When a woman becomes widow or get divorced by her husband ın the initial phase of the marnage, she returns to her natal hamlet and lıve wıth her parents or brothers. Thus they return to their parental home along wıth children when their husbands dıe or when heavy quarrel takes place betwıeen husband and wıfe leading to divorce The father or

brother offer shelter, economic and social security to their daughter / sister at the time of need When a woman becomes widow, she finds her natal home more secure than her husband's land But if she is haiing married or grown up children she will stay along with them in the husband's land itself Though women seeks shelter ın her brother's or father's hut, this will not continue permanently When her children grow up and become mature enough to contribute for the subsistence of a domestic unit, she departs from her parent's or brother's unit and erect a new hut nearby and starts her independent household However, her relationship and interaction with the parent's domestic unit continues and the mutual co-operation and shanng of food and labour continues This stay of sister along with brother makes them more attached which leads to a situation where her son / daughter get married to his son / daughter and continue to reside ın that land But in most cases, when the male children grow up, they will return to their father's land along with their mother

A nuclear unit consisting of a husband and a wife are capable enough to clear the fields and start their cultivation by their co-operation and sharing of labour Moreover, two married women ın a domestic unit leads to quarrel and disputes with regard to cooking, shanng of food, and other household management But old women especially widows or mothers will not be a problem, because they never play an active role ın the domestic activity of the household but remain as an attached member to the domestic unit A woman with her husband ın their old age prefer to stay along with their son But ıf she ıs alone or widowed, prefer to stay along with their daughters rather than their son and daughter–ın–law This shows that ıf two women come together ın one domestic unit, ıt leads to minor quarrels and conflicts But between a mother and daughter there will be no such issues They will be free and even ıf issues crop up, will not be taken seriously since ıt ıs between mother and daughter A daughter's relationship towards her mother will be more close and intimate She ıs more affectionate towards her mother and when quarrel occurs, ıt ıs the daughter who ıs expected to bear the scolding and rarely she retort Similarly, a woman should be respectful to her mother–ın–law and should maintain good relationship with her However, ın certain cases, there lacks an intimate relationship between mother_ın_law and daughter–ın–law which results ın tension, quarrels and also accusing the other when they come together ın one household Even when the nuclear

families of two brothers live together as one household, there do occur quarrels, and their wives are prone to involve in squabbles for various reasons Women like to be completely independent in their domestic activities especially in cooking and serving Inspite of being closely related, they remain as two independent domestic unit but continue their sharing and co-operation of food, labour and maintain high degree of interaction.

Brothers who are closely related will erect their huts nearby and reside in one area Parents, if they are capable of doing work and looking their farm land, will reside in a separate hut forming an independent unit but maintain close interaction with their son living nearby If they are very old, widow / widower, they will be attached to the household of any of their sons, usually the youngest son. However, they will be cared by other children also and food will be given to their parents from the households of all the children Thus the care of old or widowed parents will be shared equally by all the sons

A person during his life time belongs to two or three domestic groups The first would be his nuclear family of orientation, the second would be his family of procreation with spouse and children, and the third would be in old age with one's son and son's wife and children Out of the total of 35 old couples in the sample, 17 couples in their old age are staying along with their son's household and 10 are dependent to their sons who are unmarried Only 5 couples are attached to their daughter's domestic unit and 3 couples are staying alone forming their independent domestic unit It is very clearly evident from the analysis that parents during their old age prefer to stay along with their son's family In rare occasions they do get attached to the daughters household especially in cases where they have no sons This goes in conformity with the patrilineal principle of the Muduga kinship system

Table 4 5 Attachment of old couples to household of kin

Relation with members of the attached household

Married son	Unmarried son	Daughter	Alone
17	10	5	3

After the marriage of a son, the newly married couple will not stay for a long period along with parents forming a joint family The new couple is capable of cultivating their own separate farm and in the process separates themselves from the family of orientation and start their independent domestic unit Eventhough they separate from their parent's domestic unit, they are closely attached to their parents' household and mutual co-operation and sharing of labour takes place

At Thaze-Abbannoor, the domestic activities of Kakki's household is done mainly by his wife Neeli, daughter Pavashi and the recently married daughter–in-law Mathi After getting married to their son Raju, Mathi has become a member of that domestic unit and is doing most of the work for Kakki's *koorai* However, Mathi maintains her close relation and interaction with her mother's and elder sister Vellachi's *koorai* which is situated very near to her husband's koorai, and assist them also in their household affairs Moreover, Mathi is getting regular share of food from her mother's *koorai* During the crop season, Raju and his wife erected their small hut in the farm land, and were living separately from their parents leading an independent unit in the farm for about 3-4 months Even then, during day time they use to visit the hamlet and borrow provisions from his parent's hut Thus, though they have started their domestic unit in the farm hut, it was not totally an independent unit

After the complete separation of domestic units of sons from their parental joint family household, each man is the head of his own independent nuclear household and manages it's affairs All the ceremonial gifts and obligations are transacted and discharged in his name However, regarding the payment of bride-price, it is the father who takes the responsibility of making this payment and decision on matters related to marriage He will be assisted in this aspect by his elder sons Thus it is the father who represents the related families and make the payment on behalf of the entire kin group

Households of the brothers constituting the minimal unit of the descent group and other closely related agnates help one another and co-operate in all occasions, and exchange food and labour much more than the members of the kin unit of a wider span. In day to day interaction, economic activities and other affairs, these close relatives usually residing nearby forms small km units or close circle of relatives and function as corporate

units It is to be mentioned here that, apart from own siblings and sons, these kin units also consist of close afflnes usually brother- in-laws, who are residing near by [7]

Division of labour

Households are the basic domain ın which division of labour and sharing of ıts product take place Different members ın a household perform various roles, duties and obligations to perform for the benefit of the family and household as a whole Members contribute their labour power according to their capability and also ın accordance with the degree of responsibility and the products are consumed or utilised by the entire members together

Even though members of the household work together for the collective benefit, their relative contributions vary from person to person based mainly on sex and age as well as their skill and training Thus ın a domestic unıt, fully abled persons who are active economically have greater standing than the disable and less productive aged ones The welfare of the former sort of household members are treated as a matter of concern than the welfare of the latter, and ın certain cases, the former are apt to find their needs more often met However, to a large extend such discrimination as to the welfare of the members are suppressed and the product of the labour are distnbuted and shared among the household members irrespective of age and sex

The necessity for co-operation ın subsistence activities ıs essentially a function of thc sexual division of labour and hence the ideal pattern ıs that at least one member each from both sex should be the minimum composition of a domestic unıt Males and females must depend on each other, for each sex ıs trained ın certain skills which the other sex ıs not However ıt should be mentioned here that under certain circumstances, a man or a woman wıll often do some unskilled task normally done by the opposite sex Thus, when w omen undergo pollution dunng menstruation period, ıt ıs the husband ın the absence of other adult females, who take care of the preparation of food Female children ıf present wıll help and assist hım ın thıs task Similarly, women on certain cases use to do hazardous work lıke breaking fire-logs ın the absence of males Thus the conventions of the sexual division of labour especially for tasks not requiring special skills are ın mos'

cases not rigidly maintained. And major task requiring skilled labour in most cases are taken up only by the particular sex .

In shifting cultivation all the members of the household co-operate with each other in almost all its phases from clearing the bushes till the harvest Certain activities in the cultivation process however are sex linked and needs special skill. The male members of the household are responsible for cleaning the early set of fields and the female members are responsible for most of the subsequent care of the fields, though men and children may help

It is the major task of the men to set the field ready for cultivation This cleaning of fields (kadu *saveral*) involve the cutting of bushes and shrubs and burning them when it gets dned The major part of the shifting cultivation *{kadu pani*) such as ploughing and sowing, weeding and harvesting, will be done mainly by the women Weeding is also an assignment in the phase of shifting cultivation performed stnctly by the females Normally all the female members of the related households collect together to do this weeding work But in certain cases, the tall bushes which grow among the *tuvari* crop will be slashed down by males Among Mudugas, women is more associated with the field *{kadu)* and it is mainly her responsibility to manage the different affairs involved in the cultivation This close association of women and field is clearly depicted when people often say "*rantu pennamba kettiyal rantu kaadu bettadom*", meaning "if you marry two women, you should also clear two fields" Moreover, from this saying it is clearly evident that no two women even if married to one man hke to live together and co-operate as members of same domestic unit They nevertheless clear and cultivate separate fields and establish their independent domestic unit by living separately. However, this custom of a man maintaining two wives at the same time is very rare among the Mudugas and there is only one case of this sort which is of Vellinkiri's family [8]

When the crops become matured and is ready to produce the yield, men engage in watching the farm land They erect small watch-huts *{kava sala*), and spend their nights in the fields, watching the crops from birds and wild animals In some cases, both husband and wife shift their residence to the field so as to spend more time in taking care of the crops and will return after the harvest is over However, in both cases it is the male who is mainly involved in the duty of watching the fields. Men will also engage other than this in

hunting and trapping of wild games, collecting honey, cycas seeds, fire woods, felling bamboos etc , which is hazardous and needs more labour and skill

Women and children are mainly engaged in gathering and collecting of green leaves, roots and tubers, mushrooms etc Men rarely engage in this activity of gathering Collection of honey is done only by men They are very much skilled in this activities such as climbing big trees, driving away the bees etc , and also tracing the way and finding out the honey comb in thick forest Hunting is strictly a male activity where group of men gather together and proceed into the forest in search of wild game for two-three days In certain cases, husband and wife together go into the forest in search of roots especially *pada veru* which is used for trade in market This is during rainy season when no other main agricultural work is possible Sometimes children along with elder females also go in search for roots and tubers both for sale and consumption Fishing is also done by females in the nearby stream and fields and during rainy season women and children together engage in collecting crabs (*nendu*) and small fishes from near by streams and fields

Male members also engage in making agricultural and other household tools made of wood such as mortar and pestle, wooden spoons, bamboo benches for sitting, brooms, handles for iron implements etc It is the duty of the male members to trade their products like grams, milk, or honey in the market and with the money to buy household provisions necessary for running the domestic unit They are supposed to earn money through this trade or through labour work and ensure that the household is sufficient with the necessary-items Though women at time go for labour work, it is not regular and they never involve in the financial matters which is restricted to the male members who is the head of the household

Table 4 6 Sexual Division of Labour

Male tasks	Female tasks
Clearing fields slashing, cutting and burning	Cultivation : sowing, weeding and harvesting

Watching of fields	Collecting roots, tubers and green leaves
Hunting, trapping and fishing	Collecting crabs and small fish from fields
Cutting bamboos, collecting cycas seeds and gathering honey	Pounding & grinding grains
Labour work, selling and trading forest products	Cooking and serving of food
Building huts	Plastering floor and minor repairs
Skinning and butchering of games	Fetching water and washing
Making wooden utensils and handles for implements	Caring children
Herding and milching catties	Herding goats and keeping chicken

Men at times work on daily wages for outsiders and manage the household expenditure Apart from shifting cultivation, gathenng green leaves, roots and tubers, fire woods, etc it is the major responsibility of the women to manage the domestic activity of like of cooking and serving of food for the members Females will have the sole control in household affairs and other related domestic activities Grains like *rai, same, tuvari* and other domestic provisions will be in the control of the women and it is their duty to keep the grains stored so as to use dunng the rainy season when nothing could be earned or no labour work is available When they are in need of money or there is a scarcity of other household provisions, men will take away some of the grains stored in the *koorai* without the knowledge of women and sell in the market to buy rice and other provisions Thus the routine work of the household is mainly in the hands of women and a man largely engage with work in the forest and other associated tasks Men actively engage in the building of huts, when women do most of the maintenance and minor repairs Though women and female children go for collecting fire-woods from nearby fields, it is mainly the men w ho proceed into the deep forest and cut big logs to use as fire-wood Unlike men, women very seldom go as wage laborers to work for outsiders, but are mostly confined to ones own domestic activities and farm work.

Mudugas equate women with land and often say that a man's life will be smooth or comfortable only when he is assisted by a female through which he owns a farmland and cultivate it Thus women *(pennu)* and *(kadu)* makes a man establish his own household *(koorai)* This shows that only through the mutual co-operation of male and female, that they can cultivate the field and establish their household They also consider that a person without women and land is not a complete Muduga man, and they say, "*pennum kadum illathavanu emmuthil bele ille*" (One who is without women and field do not have any value among us) Thus the assistance of women ensures a man's food This is clear when Mudugas often say *"pennu irunthal ninakkupittu kedakkum*"meaning If you have a women you will get food

A husband and a wife should be very much sincere and particular regarding their household responsibilities and obligations, and should give utmost importance to it than any other This aspect of household responsibility, especially that of a women is very well depicted in a Muduga proverb "*konte minukki alane kollum, mettam kadu uluthavaneyum kollum*", that a woman who always care for her beauty will destroy her husband like how a hard and rough land destroys the plougher This says that a woman should not be always bothered about her beauty only, but should be dedicated to her husband and must be sensible about the responsibilities of her household If wife and husband do not co-operate with each other and the wife fails to discharge her obligations then there is a serious threat to the stability of such marital bond

Children from young age itself start assisting their parents in most activities When children reaches the age of 8 - 10, they are matured enough to contnbute their service in household duties and other activities like fetching water, collecting roots, tubers and fire-woods, pounding grams, herding catties and assisting their parents in agricultural activities As they enter adolescence, they begin to play a major role in subsistence activities, helping m all hard work of their sex Grown up female children assist their mother in cooking and take charge of the domestic or household activities in her absence A woman will be assisted by her daughter in carrying out agricultural activities and other domestic works A girl goes out with her mother to the field to assist her from an early age She is made to carry small farm implements like sickle, hoe etc., or to assist her mother in various agricultural activities like sowing, weeding or even harvesting Later

she becomes a regular helper in work in her parents farm land and in the corporate working group of kinsmen and others in which her mother joins Female children also take responsibility of looking after young children in the hamlet when their mother is away from the hut Male children will engage more in the farm land activities with his father or will clear their own field and do cultivation and start contributing to the subsistence of the household /

Thus apart from the co-operation between husband and wife, another important role of domestic organization is that a parent and child are mutually obliged to help each other when either needs help If the child is too young or the parent too old, he or she must be supported as a dependent by the other

Depending on the members constituting the domestic unit and the nature of the responsibility carried out by them for the functioning of the domestic unit, members of the household fall into two categories These are fully abled persons and are active economically contributing a major share of labour to the domestic activities The other type of members are marginal members or attached members who have joined previously existing and viable units and whose labour is not essential or necessary to the viability of the unit Though in certain cases, old parents are members of the domestic unit since its formation, their labour is considered marginal to the overall functioning of the domestic group and hence they are treated as partially abled members Children who are between the age of 8 - 14 are also treated as partially abled members since they only assist their parents in domestic activities

Table 7 shows the distribution of abled persons in the representative sample of 191 households Here persons above the age of 14 and below 55 and who are fully capable of contributing labour for the functioning of the domestic unit are considered as abled persons Out of the 191 households, 120 households are having one abled male person and 113 households are having one abled female person. Households with two abled male persons are 44 in number and 42 households are with two abled female members. When households with 3 abled females are 28 in number, only 16 households are having 3 abled male members There are 3 households with 4 abled males and households with 4 abled females are 4 in number. There are two households with 5 abled male members. In the entire sample there are 6 households without one abled male member and 4 households

without one abled female member Out of a total of 959 persons, there are 297 abled females Compared to females the number of abled males are slightly lesser, and are 278 in number

Including both males and females, 85 households are having 2 abled members and 43 with 3 abled members There are 28 households with 4 abled members The maximum number of abled members (both male and female) that an household consist is 7 and there are 6 such households in the sample One abled member households are 6 in number

Table 4 7 Distribution of abled members per household

	No of perons per household								
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total Persons	Average no per household
Males	6	120	44	16	3	2	-	'-	278	F45
Females	4	113	42	28	4	-	-	-	297	1 55
Males & Females	-	6	85	43	28	17	6	6	575	3 01
Partially abled									384	2 01
Total									959	5 02

A feeling of alienation and disappointment and a notion that one is helpless is not at all seen among the older generation The) do discharge economic activities according to their might such as assisting in cultivation, herding catties, collecting tubers and green leaves, looking after children etc , and make themselves busy always This state of mind of the elders is mainly based on the attachment, love and affection shown to them by the younger generation The younger generation accepts and acknowledge the presence of elders in the family and give due value to their advice and suggestions

Households and economic co-operation

Much of the corporate economic activities can he seen to be more clear in the functional level of the household and hence a family or household thus obtains expression in economic spheres as a self-sufficient entity In most cases, the one and the same However, when in need, closely related families and kinsmen often work as one unit on the agricultural land Apart from the individual household or the family, bonds of kinship underlying wider km groups tend to organise economic activities among the Mudugas This type of mutual dependence on kinship relations for economic activities and co-operation is an important feature among the Mudugas Despite the fact that many are living in independent households, they receive the needed recognition and support from extra-familial km Thus in most cases, the kin group and the work group tend to be one and the same Between these closely related households sharing of cooked food also takes place

There are different levels or circles of km falling between immediate relatives of the close circle and distant relatives of the wider circle from whom one can derived help and co-operation in economic and other domestic activities Between the member of different nuclear households in an hamlet, the obligations are more intense and the social interaction more frequent similarly as existing among the members of a joint household So that, though they reside as independent nuclear households, their mutual rights and obligations and day to day interaction, in fact, makes them to function almost like a joint household

Thus there is no greater logic to the argument that large extended household types are essential to better fit an economy which claim large number of working members [9] Hence it is important to see how individual households are better organized to meet their economic needs and how they arrive at these interpersonal relation and interaction for such relatively large group activity

These co-operation and corporate nature extends further to other levels of kin or km circle based on the degree of closeness at the time of necessity of labour power Thus, kapadia rightly points out, "even in those cases where the property is divided and the income is not pooled the constituent families maintain their connection through mutual co-operation and rights and obligations other than those of property" **(1959 : 261).**

It is very important to understand that for an household to function as the primary unit of economic co-operation, it should include a minimum of one conjugal unit Without this basic sharing of labour and co-operation i e , between a husband and a wife, it cannot form a complete household Thus it is evident that among the Mudugas, nuclear family is the form which tends to be viable for a longer period and hence the typical household type Families remain small because they are efficient enough to carry out their domestic functions, and moreover, when it finds difficult for managing the agricultural process alone , they can seek help from the related households which is a type of mutual co-operation and the help will be paid back when the others are in similar need

There are various levels or units of economic co-operation constituted by very close as well as wider km circle constituting of distant relatives The primary or basic unit of co-operation and shanng is the nuclear family consisting of husband and wife who reside together, cook and eat together and manage one farm land Next to this level of co-operation is the unit consisting of primary kinsmen other than once nuclear family, but fonn members of the same domestic unit (this is with regard to a joint family household), cooking and eating together and co-operating in domestic and agricultural activities, but manages their independent fields

The next sphere of kinsmen who engage in co-operation and shanng of labour is composed of different but closely related households of immediate or primary kinsmen with whom there is frequent interaction and shanng of food This food shanng unit is known as the *beethekarai* (will be discussed later in this chapter) Outer to this circle is the wider km group consisting of relatives of the secondary kin type who may belong to the same descent group or may be close affines but with whom there is no frequent interaction in domestic activities but only co-operate and participate in agncultural activities at the time of labour need The last and the outer most sphere consists of any other member living in the hamlet with whom there is no close relationship and obligations, but whose help and co-operation can be asked for at any time which should be strictly reciprocated In the first two levels of mutual help and co-operation, I e., among the immediate close kin, there is no strict rule of reciprocity and even if the help is not returned, no one takes notice of it This is like what Evans Pritchard says of the, Nuer, 'it is all giving and begging' (1951 . 132)

Analyzing these different levels of co-operation, it is seen that the areas of co-operation vanes from one level to the other, i. e , activities which are performed together and separatcly by the component families This variation ın co-operate nature from the basic unit to the wider unit ıs shown ın the following table

Table 4 8 Units of co-operation and their activities

Unit of Co-operation	Activities performed together	Activities performed separately
Nuclear family	Cooking, eating, dwelling, farming	--
Joint household with more than one nuclear family	Cooking, eating, dwelling, & frequent shanng of labour	Farming
Beethekarar labour	Shanng of food and shanng of dwelling, farming	Cooking, eating
Wider kın unit	Co-operate ın economic activities	Cooking, eating, dwelling, farming

This nature of co-operation can be explained with the case of Mele-Abbannoor Kaden's household and the different levels of corporate units engaging for his economic activities Kaden's domestic unit ıs composed of his nuclear family consisting of his wife and unmarried son along with another son Kalı and his wife, thus making ıt a lineally joint household Both Kaden's unit and his son Kali's unit co-operate and participate together ın almost all economic and domestic activities They reside together ın one hut, cooking and eating together forming one commensal unit Though they function as one unit ın other domestic activities, with regard to cultivation, they form independent units maintaining their separate fields, such that only shanng of labour and co-operation takes place However, this labour exchange ıs very frequent The income from the crops cultivated by both units will be pooled together so as to manage the domestic affairs jointly But whenever there ıs more work which cannot be performed by members of the joint household of Kaden, he seeks help from his immediate kın, vız., his younger brother Panah and his elder son Linkan who are staying near by and whose households having close interaction and shanng of labour and food between Kaden's unit.

The next circle of labour unit includes kinsmen of the second order consisting of Kaden's sister's husband Nanjan's and daughter's husband Chekidan's household with whom there is no frequent interaction but only co-operate and participate when in need of labour Outer to this sphere of kinsmen are members who are not immediate or close but arc distant relatives residing in the same hamlet (1 e , distant agnates and affines) who work on wage basis and with whom there exist a strict rule of reciprocity (see fig 4 20)

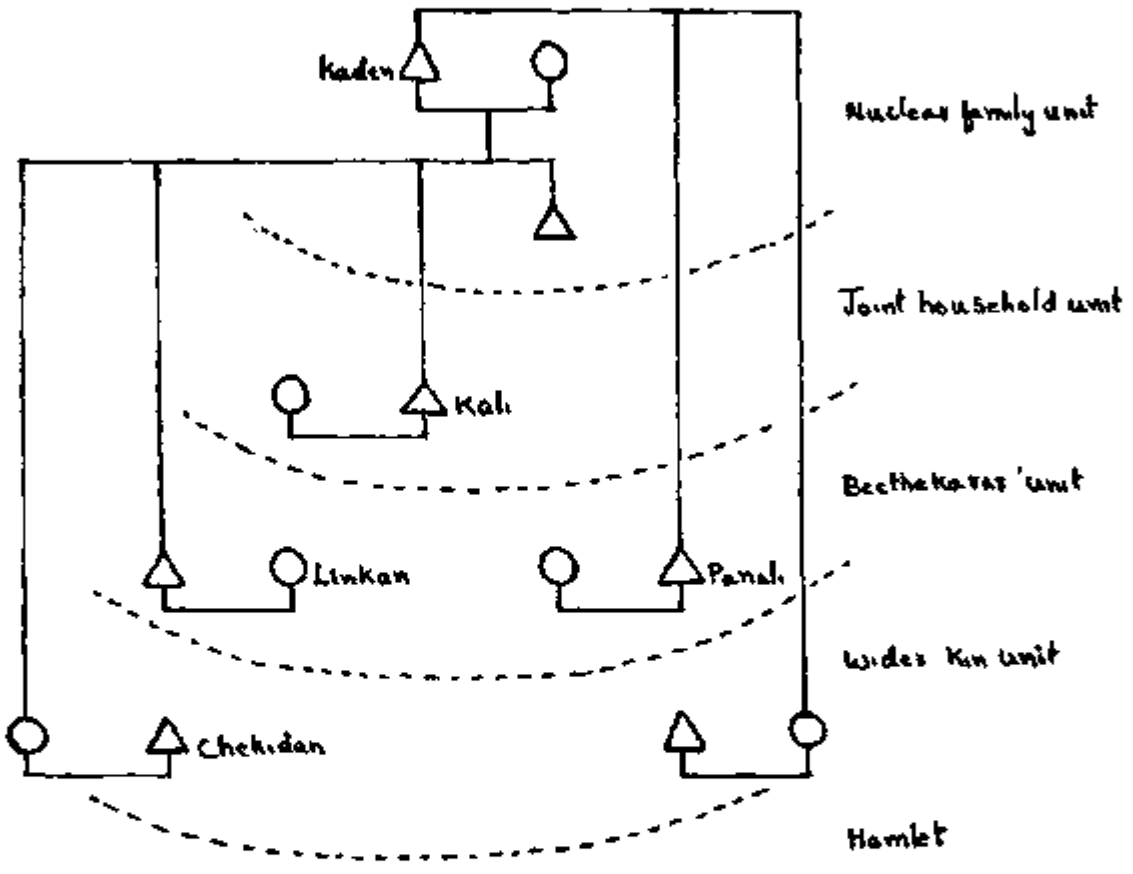

Fig 4 20 Different levels of corporate units of Kaden

Inspire of the structural difference that is always maintained between the agnates and affines in their kinship behaviour ceremonial roles and obligations, they nonetheless from a single unit and co-operate together in many other day to day events and occasions Agnates and affines exchange services and extend mutual help in their daily ling. They together participate in almost all economic activities such as cultivation, hunting, fishing,

gathering, construction of huts, etc. Here, an analysis of the composition of Muduga hunting groups show co-operative nature of agnates and affines residing in the same hamlet

Table 4 9 shows the kin composition of 45 hunting groups observed at Thaze-Abbannoor at different time between 1996 March to 1997 March. The Table shows that out of the 45 hunting groups observed, only 10 groups were composed of agnates alone. When groups consisted of brothers alone were 6, that which consisted of two brother-in-laws were 11. The Table also shows that there are also hunting groups at times composed of husband and wife, and there are two cases of such group. This shows that the sharing of labour and co-operation in economic activities are not restricted to the members of the households or the close agnatic unit, but also includes closely related affines residing in the hamlet thereby reducing the occurrence of economic units based strictly on descent

Table 4 9 Composition of hunting groups indicating the nature of relationship

Categorical composition of hunting group	Frequency
Brothers	6
Ego , Affine-G^o (2 members)	11
Brothers , affines - G^o	12
Brothers , agnates – G^{+1} , agnates-G^{+2}, affines – G^o	2
Brothers , non-agnates (affine's affine) –G^{+1} , affines-G^o	1
Brothers , affines-G^{+1} , affines-G^{-1}	1
Brothers , agnates-G^{+1} , affines – G^o	1
Brothers , agnate-G^{+1}	1
Ego , agnates – G^{-1}, affines-G^{-1}	2
Ego , affines G^{-1}, agnates-G^{+1}	1
Ego , agnates – G^{-1}	3
Ego , wife	2
Brothers, affines-G^{-1}, affines-G^{-1}	2

G — refers to generation, and G^o means same generation, G^{+1} first descending generation etc

Pattern of Residence and sharing of Food

Huts and residence Muduga huts are relatively small constructed using simple materials like bamboo from the forest and strong climbers or sliced barks for tying the poles. Dry *dharbha* grass (a wild variety of grass) is used for thatching the roof The hut is usually rectangular with triangular shaped roofing pattern. Usually two or more huts are built

attached to one another in a linear row A Muduga hut typically consists of one mam room which is also the kitchen called *koorai*, and a small lengthy varandha called *dheetti* The main room is sized around 2 ½ meters width and 3 meters length and is used for cooking dining and sleeping The *dhetti* is one meter wide and of 3 meters length Usually for the Muduga huts, the roof is too low to permit standing upright inside the hut Floors are neatly plastered with mixture of cowdung and clay and is polished with polishing stones (*minukku kallu)*

The hearth (*kudia*) is situated in a corner represented by three stone and will be attached to the wall by a small platform (*mathilu*) where essential provisions like salt, chilly, sugar, tea powder, etc , are kept There is no specially constructed ventilation for the hut and it will be always dark inside A Muduga hut is usually small in size, and there will not be much space for easy movement of people However few members can comfortably remain inside a hut and engage in household work

In a Muduga hut, the kitchen which is the main room is itself the sleeping room They ha\ e nothing other than the mat to spread on the floor on which they sleep stretching their legs towards the hearth Dunng winter season, the hearth will be burning throughout the night Those members who sleep outside the kitchen in the *dheetti* keep large logs burning in the centre and sleep around the fire Dunng winter season, nights are chilly and they keep large slow burning logs and put fire in the front-yard of the huts and members of neighbounng huts gather round the fire warming themselves This type of camp-fire is called *theebendi* Dunng nights there will be usually 3 or 4 such *theebendi* sites at different corners of the hamlet

Abo\ e the hearth w ill be seen the loft made of bamboo which is used for stonng domestic equipments, grains and other provisions This loft which is made of bamboo is called *grashi* On the opposite of the hearth there will be strong bamboo platform erected on four bamboo legs, which is called *pattada* for keeping big bamboo baskets permanently installed for stonng grains, earthen pots and other household utensils. In another portion of the hut attached to the wall will be having a small elevated region to keep vessels for stonng water.

The grinding stone (*beesu kallu)* another important item usually kept in a comer of the *dheetti* which is used for powdering *rai* and *tuvan* grains. Every hut may not have

this grinding stone, and souse the neighbours stone Similarly, wooden mortar and pestle *(wal* and *ulakka)* which is extensively shared by neighbours There may be usually only 3 or 4 wooden mortars for one entire hamlet consisting around 25 to 30 households and they will be always kept outside the hut in convenient corners so that any one can use it to pound grains when necessary These mortars are not owned by any particular household but it is commonly owned by the hamlet However, wooden pestle will be owned by few households which will be shared by others who do not have

Very closely related kinsmen may erect huts joined in a linear row with only the kitchen separated and having a long single joined varandha called *otndhetn* However, the main room and the *dheetti* will be having separate doors (*basa*)which are very small so as one should bend much to go inside The lack of ventilation and presence of small doors are to protect from heavy cold and storm A single hut will never be partitioned into different rooms so as to accommodate other households

The members of the family / household tend to reside or inhabit together in one hut They cook food, eat and sleep under one shelter in most cases But in certain cases where the family consists of grown up male or female children or other members, they tend to sleep in other neighboring huts if there is no sufficient space Thus, the grown up children of the hamlet will sleep separately in any hut which is spacious This is the *bandaru urangra koorat* (boys sleeping hut) or *veemar urangra koorai* (girls sleeping hut) Usually there will be no separate hut specially made for this But boys and girls and sleep in any hut where members are few and have sufficient space to accommodate quite a few members These are usually huts occupied by aged couples or a widowed person, or whose members have shifted to their farmland hut Thus grown up male and female children *(bandaru* and *veemar)* sleep along with their age mates in other huts, and married people are restricted to their own huts with their wives and younger children When people come from other hamlets as guests, they will be allowed to sleep in the *dheetti* or in any other hut where there is sufficient space It is clearly evident that, while old and married people normally sleep in their own *koorai,* a good number of younger and unmarried persons will be sleeping elsewhere The sleeping arrangements of younger persons are usually quite temporary, changing not only with the availability of places to sleep but also with the availability of friends of the same age and sex. After they reach

adolescence, and until marriage, young persons often prefers to sleep with their age-mates rather than with older or younger members of their own flamilies This is the place and time for entertainment, fun and merry making, story-telling, sharing their day's experiences and all sorts of activities attractive to adolescents and young adults

Though few members of the household reside or sleep in other neighbouring huts during night, this will not affect their household membership, nevertheless they remain as full members of the domestic unit where he / she participates in domestic affairs and share his / her labour Thus, it should be mentioned here that though members, especially children gather together and sleep in other *koorai*, they never become part of that domestic unit merely because of sleeping, but belongs to different households They will finish their meals from their respective *koorai* and in the night gather together for sleeping where there is sufficient space

Children who go to sleep in other neighbouring huts will sleep together in the *dheetti* which will also be closed on four sides They will not sleep in the kitchen or the main room which is restricted for the *koorakarar* (household members) But if there are huts where no members are staying or cooking, then children who come for sleeping can use the mam room also Among the Mudugas, the kitchen is considered as the main room and the members of the household sleep in the kitchen which is also termed as *koorai* Kitchen or the main *koorai* is restricted only for the members of that household to dine and sleep and is mostly considered as a private place for the family members

Neighbours in the hamlet who come for casual visit will not often enter the kitchen or *koorai* but will restrict themselves in the *dheetti* itself However, when relatives from other hamlets visit a hut as guests, they will be allowed to dine with other household members m the kitchen, but will sleep either in the *dheetti* or other hut where they could be accommodated Mudugas never serve food outside the kitchen and they consider as ill-treating to dine in the *dheetti* This is mainly because, a sort of pollution is attached to the *dheetti* since women during their menstrual period are secluded in a comer of the *dheetti* So when others are called for food or when relatives visit the *koorai,* they will be invited to the kitchen for eating along with the household members after which they go out and spend time either in the *dheetti* or will sleep in other neighbouring huts

Just like the children's practice of sleeping in other huts, in certain cases, old couples or widowed parents are seen residing in their own separate hut even though they form part of their children's domestic unit This will be usually a small hut nearby their children's or other close kin's hut to which they are attached to. Though they reside in separate hut, they rarely cook their own food and will get major share of their meals from their children's household to which they belong But at times they do minor cooking like roasting roots and tubers or boiling *tuvari* seeds during the day time Since they are not capable enough to carry out the domestic activity and manage the household affairs independently, they will remain as dependent members to their close kin's household In such cases, they will not be a full-fledged or core members to the household, but remain as partial or marginal members with regard to their share of labour in domestic activities However, they may co-operate with and assist the household members in domestic as well as other agricultural activities And, in case of these attached members having their own farm land, it will be cultivated mainly by the household members to whom he / she is attached

At Thaze-Abbannoor, Kaden's aged and widowed mother Regi is staying in a small hut nearby her son's and daughters' household Though she is residing separately, she is attached to the household of her second son Velli and will be gettmg her major share of food from Velli's household She also gets a share of food and help from the households of other two sons, Kaden and Panali and from her daughter Vellachi, who are residing nearb> However, she spends most of the time at Velli's hut and assist his household members in domestic and other agricultural activities Moreover dunng 1995 when Regi's daughter's daughter Beere and her husband Murugan lost their hut due to heavy storm and rain, they came to stay in Regi's hut At that time Regi shifted her stay along with Velli for a few months becoming a full member of that domestic unit

All the huts in a hamlet will be more or less similar in structure The members of a household together work for constructing the hut and they are usually constructed very easily Some times an household may rely on close kin for work like getting bamboos and dry grass from forest, roofing, thatching, etc Thus one or two men assisted by two or three women and children working several hours a day for 3 to 4 days can construct an a\ erage hut

The Mudugas do not shift their huts and residence very often Huts will be repaired and re-thatched whenever needed, usually once in two years or so Though they shift the fields every 2 or 3 years due to the practice of shifting cultivation, they ne\er shift their huts to follow their fields However, they erect a simple, temporary and crude form of hut in the midst of their farm land to watch the crops from wild animals and birds during the later phase of the crop The watch hut built in the farmland is called *kava-sala* or *alai* When the crops are ready, they erect the *sala* in their respective fields and will temporarily shift their stay to this hut for about 3 to 4 months until the harvest is over However, all the members of the household will not shift to the farm land and dunng their stay in the fields, they still maintain close interaction with the hamlet They make frequent visits to the hamlet to look after their huts and other belongings and sometimes to borrow grams and other provisions from their related households Unlike the clustered pattern of residence in the *ooru*, in the fields they have a sort of dispersed pattern of residence *Sala* will not be erected closely But when farm lands of closely related kinsmen especially of brothers are very adjacent, any of the related household will erect the *sala* and one or two members of these related households stay in the farm land to take care of all the closely lying fields This shifting of residence between the hamlet and the field is well referred in their saying "*Kadaru masam, ooraru masam*", meaning "six months in the hamlet and six months in the fields" After harvest, they come back to their permanent hut in the hamlet For a period of about 3 to 4 months they live in the watch-house *(sale)* erected in the farmland However dunng the day time in this penod, people come to the hamlet and engage in other activities and by evening return to their farm land hut In certain cases, only male members will spend the night time in the farm hut where as women and children will stay back in the main hut itself In such cases, a close kin like, brother or eldest son may also be with him in the farm hut dunng night

The lineal inheritance of land from father to children as well as the need for mutual co-operation and assistance in economic activities make the closely related kinsmen especially, agnates to clear and cultivate adjacent and closely lying lands. Table *2 9* shows the nature of distribution of adjacent farmlands of close kinsmen as in 1996

Table 4 10 Distribution of Adjacent farm lands of close kin

Type of relationship	F-S	B-B	B-Z	F-D	M-D
Frequency	9	17	10	3	2

An analysis of the pattern of clearing and cultivation of farmlands of 41 households at Thaze-Abbannoor hamlet shows that, in 17 cases, brothers lands which are adjacent to each other, and in 9 cases sons near to their father's land The Table also shows that in 10 cases sisters are having farmland near to their brothers and in 3 cases daughters have land adjacent to their fathers, and in 2 cases to their mothers

Food and Sharing The Mudugas are habituated to take only one main meal per day which is cooked in the evening In the day time most of the people will be away from the hamlet either in their fields or in the forest do not generally get back to their hut and cook food In the afternoon, usually while working in the farm land, they will satisfy with any light food such as boiled *tuvan* seeds, some tubers or black tea Even if they are in the hut during day time, they rarely prepare any food and may sometimes boil some roots or tubers and thus satisfy with light meals

The cooking of food is the main duty of the females Women are assisted by their grown up female children in preparing the mam meal. They also help by fetching water and fire-woods, washing, pounding grains, etc Adult males rarely engage in cooking but when women undergo pollution due to monthly menstruation, and if other adult females are absent in the household, husband will engage in cooking for the entire seven days At this time, he will be assisted by his elder children

A mam meal, however, is normally prepared once in a day i e., in the evening After the cooking is finished, the food is shared in separate plates and is kept aside. All the members in a domestic unit do not generally dine together. Usually father and younger children eat together Later, grownup females eat their food Mother will be the last to take food in the family Usually women will not eat along with males and particularly in

the presence of her son-in-law, father-in-law and husband's elder brother with whom she has avoidance relationship

Among the Mudugas, the main meal is shared with other closely related or neighbouring households with whom they maintain a food shanng relation. This practice is known as *beet he vidi athu* and these linked households who form a food sharing unit are called *beethekarar* The number of food shares exchanged between two households depend on the number of primary relationship (M, F, B, Z, S, D, W, H) existing between these households Thus for e g , if a person's mother lives with his younger brother's family, he has to give one share of food to his brother's family and one share to his mother Usually 3 or 4 closely related and neighboring households enter in such food shanng relationship forming a food-sharing unit Each of these households also maintain *beethe* relations with other households with regard to their relationship Any member of a household if having primary relationship with members of another household, it may result into *beethe* relationship Fig 4 20 shows the pattern of *beethe* relationship maintained betw een different households at Thaze-Abbannoor hamlet

This sharing of main meals is not of a generalized type, but it is considered as a type of balanced reciprocity and the *beethe* partners are obliged to send their share of food to their respective *beethekarar* in the same quantity every night without fail This exchange of *beethe* is primarily based on close kinship relation, and an household maintain or enter in *beethe* relation with the households of the primary km of either the husband, wife or even son's wife However, closeness of residence is also a factor of *beethe* relation, and thus two households which are specially close usually maintain *beethe* relation even though no members of either units are immediate kin Similarly, if the households of close kin are situated at far distance, they usually will not have a regular shanng of food mainly due to lack of convenience, but will only maintain sporadic give and take relation which is not a regular and obligatory one Thus, Ramanan and Chithambaran of Thaze-Abbannoor is ha\mg *beethe* relation with their younger sister Maruthi's household situated nearby in the same hamlet But they are not maintaining the same type of *beethe* relation with their another sister Mathi residing a little away from the main hamlet. The reason behind this

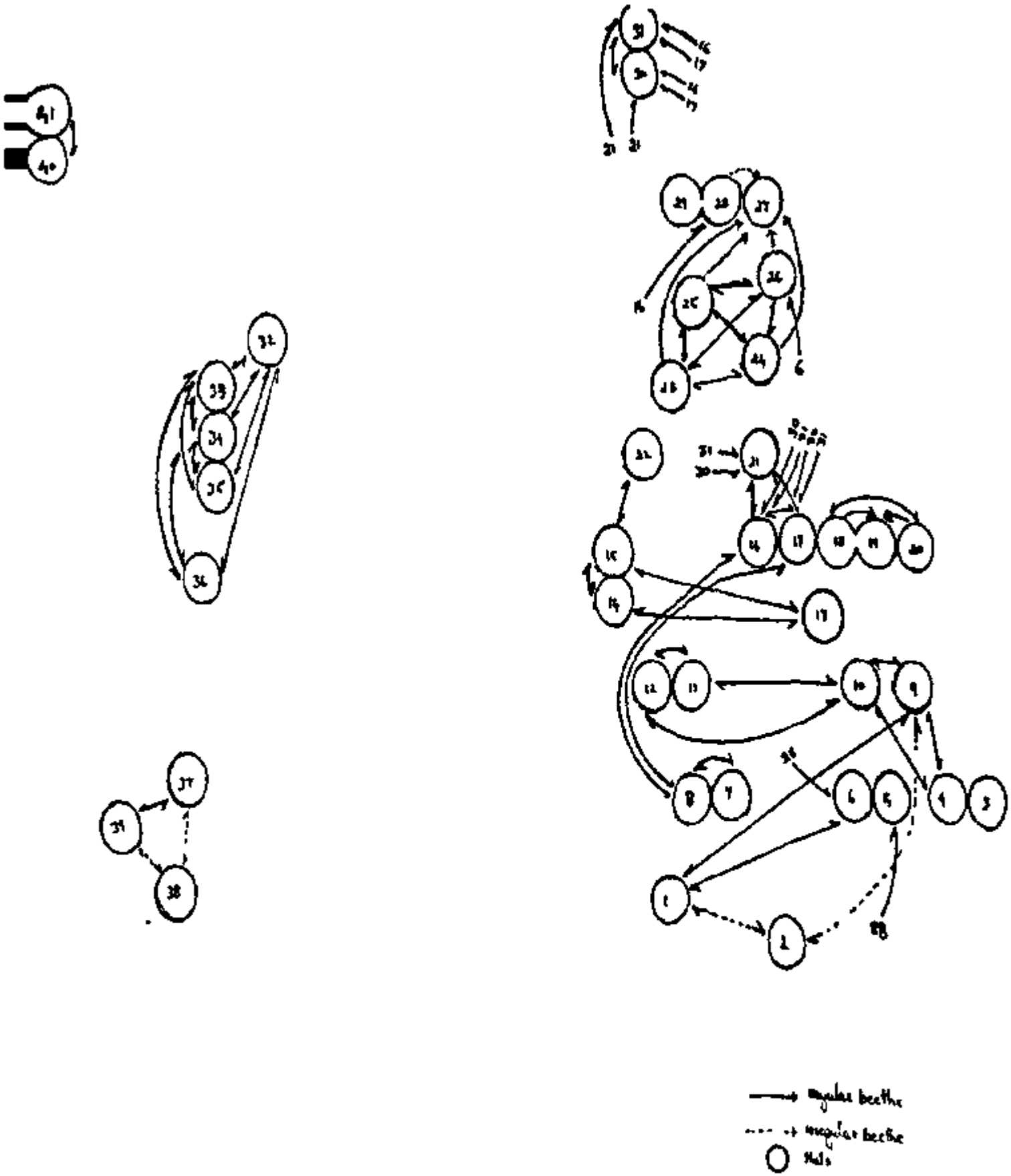

Fig 4.20(d) Pattern of *beethe* exchange at Thaze-Abbannoor hamlet

mainly because of lack of convenience in maintaining regular and frequent contacts between the households

A quarrel or dispute between households disturb the *beethe* relation Thus, Vellachi of Thaze-Abbannoor (28) [10], who is residing very close to her brothers, Kaden (23), Panah (24), and Velli (25) is not having *beethe* relation with them since her husband Nanjan had a quarrel with his wife's brothers few years back

If in certain case, a member of one household shifts to another household having *beethe* relation, due to marriage, then an additional share of food should be given to the members who have recently shifted to the other household At Thaze-Abbannoor, Kakki's household is having *beethe* relation with Kakkilinkan's household But after Kakki Linkan's wife's sister Mathi who was a member of his household, shifted to Kakki's household on marrying to Kakki's son, an additional *beethe* share is been given for the couple

It is clearly evident from the figure that, at Thaze-Abbannoor, every household maintains *beethe* relation with atleast one household An exception to this is of Pariah's household (3) who are presently having no *beethe* share with any other households Panali explained that they too were earlier having *beethe* shanng with households of Kakki (1), Kali (4) Nanjan (5) and Kakkilinkan (6) But later due to development of minor quarrels between these households and because Panalis and his family stayed away from the hamlet for a penod of time, made them unable to proceed with the exchange

There are also cases where a single household gives more than ten beethe shares when two or more closely related households join together to form a single domestic unit At Thaze-Abbannoor, after the death of Ramaswami, his wife Karimi and her children were alone in the *koorai* So Karimi's mother and two younger sisters, and elder sister Vellachi's domestic unit shifted to Ramaswami's wife's *koorai* and started functioning as one domestic unit cooking together in one hearth, though sleeping in their respective huts During those days they divided their night meals into sixteen shares including their *beethekarar* and guests The shanng which took place at Kanmi's household on 17th December, 1996 is as follows three shares went for Karimi's sister Vellachi's *koorai*, three shares for Kanmi's mother's family and three share for Karimi's household- One share each to Ramaswami's father Kaden, and Ramaswami's father's younger brothers

Velli and Panali One share was given to Ramaswami's father's mother and another one share to Karinns's younger sister Mathi who is married to Kakki's son Raju Ramaswami's FZ" children who came as guests from Thodukki hamlet got one share. That day Karimi's FBS Vella also got a share of night meal (see Fig 4 21)

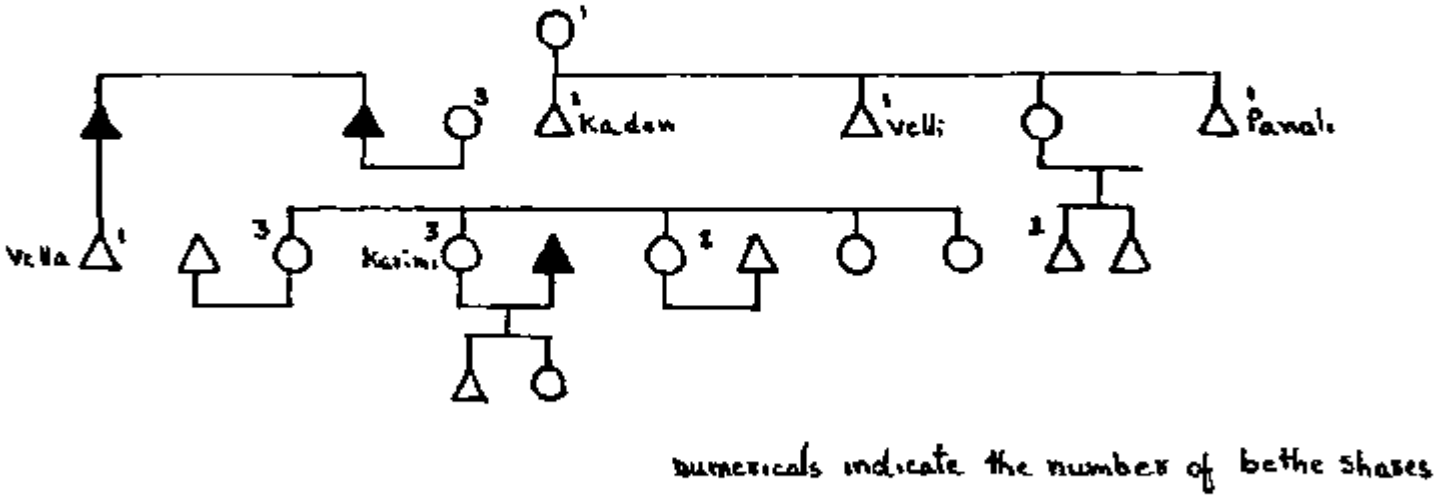

Fig 4 21 *Beethe* shares from Kanmi's household

It is to be mentioned here that in certain cases, members of a particular household will be having more than one primary or immediate kin relation with another household In such cases, more than one *beethe* shares will be given to that household depending on the number of nuclear family unils constituted by these relatives in that joint household However, if all these primary km constitute only one nuclear family unit in an household, then only one share will be given Thus at Thaze-Abbannoor, Velli's younger brother Aiyappan has married Velh's wife's younger sister, such that both Velli and his wife are having primary relation with Aiyappan's nuclear household But only one *beethe* share is given from Velh's household to Aiyappan's household since the immediate relatives of both husband and ife constitute a single nuclear family

If parents are residing in a separate hut and maintaining their independent domestic unit, it is the responsibility of their children to give a share of night meal to their old

parents Usually the exchange of food between old parents and their children's households are not of a balanced reciprocity type and sons and daughters rarely expect a share in return If there are more than one son residing nearby, they never assign the obligation of giving food for their parents to any one of them with whom the parents are attached It is each and every son's obligation and duty to give a share of meal to their old parents through which their love and concern to them is expressed The very ideology involved in the nature of Muduga food shanng habit is very well revealed in their saying, *"panki thinnal pajtaarum"*, which means "if you share while you eat, your hunger will reduce"

Table 4 11 Type of km relationship existing between *beethekarar* at Thaze-Abbannoor

Sl no	Type of km relationship between *beethekarar*	Frequency
01	B-Z	15
02	B-B	10
03	M-S	10
04	Z-Z	4
05	M-D	4
06	F-S	3
07	F-D	1
08	F/M-D	1
09	F/M-S	1
10	FB-BS	3
11	FB-BD	2
12	MB-ZS	2
13	FZ-BS	1
14	BW-HB	1
15	ZHZ-BWB	3
16	FM-SS	1
17	HM-SW	1
18	HF-SW	1
19	HFB-BSW	2
20	FFB-BSS	1

This table shows the various types of relations and their frequency existing between households which forms the basis for *beethe* relationship at Thaze-Abbannoor hamlet Out of the various relationships (both primary and secondary) existing between the different *beeihckaiar* households in the entire hamlet, the maximum number of relations observed is that of B-Z type which numbers 15. The number of *beethe* based on the primary relation of B-B is 10 and of M-S relation is also 10 in number The number of M-D relations and Z-Z relations are 4 each Analysis also shows that other secondary km relations like FB-BS, MB-ZS, FZ-BS, FM-SS, etc , and tertiary kin relations like FFB-BSS, HFB-BSW,etc , also form the basis for *beethe* relationship between households

Table 4 12 Number of Beethekarar and the type of relation with respect to the head of the household at Thaze-Abbannoor

Sl no	Head of household	Beethekarar households and the relationship
01	Kakki	(2)S , (6)cl B,SWZ, (9)Z
02	Bokken	(1)F,(9)FZ
03	Panah	-
04	Kali	(9)WF,(10)WB
05	Nanj . an	(29) D
06	Kakkilinkan	(1) cl B,WZ, (26) WM, WZ
07*	Chelli	(8) B
08	Chellan	(7) Z,M, (16) WB, (17) WB
09	Chellan	(l)WB,(2)WBS,(4)D,(10)S
10	Panah	(9)F, (11) WB, (12) WB , (4) Z
11	Kali	(10)Z,(12)B
12	Chiriyan	(10) Z , (11) B
13	Man	(14)WB , (15) WM
14	Vella	(13)Z,(15)M
15	Chonke	(14)S,(13)D,(22)BSS
16	Aiyappan	(17) B, (21) WBWB,(30)WBWB, (31) WB, (8) WZ
17	Velli	(16) B,M,(21)WBWB,(30)WBWB,(31)WB, (8)WZ
18	Bokken	(19) M, (20) BS,BW
19	Gundi	-
20	Linkan	(18) FB, FM, (19) FM, HM
21	Ramanan	(16) ZHZ, (17) ZHZ, (30) B , (31) Z,M
22	Chekidan	(15) FFB
23	Kaden	(24) B, (25) B, (26) SW; (27) M
24	Panah	(23) B, (25) B; (26) BSW, (27) M
25	Velli	(23) B, (24) B; (26) BSW, (27) M

26	Karimi	(23) HF, (24) HFB, (25) HFB; (27) HFM; (6) Z
27	Regi	-
28	Nanjan	(29)S
29	Rangan	(5)WP
30	Chitambaram	(16) ZHZ, (17) ZHZ, (21) B, (31) Z,M
31	Kullan	(16) Z; (17) Z; (21) WB, (30) WB
32	Rangan	(33) WB, (34) FB; (35) FB, (36) Z
33	Kullan	(32) Z, (34) MB, (35) MB, (36) ZHZ
34	Kalı	(32) BS, (33) ZS,Z (35) B, M (36) BD
35	Lınkan	(32) BS, (33) ZS,Z (34) B (36) BD
36	Rangan	(32) WB, (33) WBWB, (34) WFB, (35) WFB
37	Nanjappan	(38) Wcl B, (39) Wcl B
38	Maruthan	(37) cl ZH, (39) B
39	Vellınkırı	(37) cl ZH, (38) B
40	Enyan	(41) F,B
41	Mallan	(40) S

numencals ın bracket represent hut number
* represents female headed household

Regarding *beethe* sharing, the food should be sent to the related households regularly without faıl and there wıll be stnct account of the flow of food between households The same amount of food wıll be reciprocated Lack of any reciprocation over tıme from any related household would lead to resentment and breaking up of thıs sharing lınk Women take special care to send the *beethe* share to the related households immediately after the cooking ıs over without any delay Usually children wıll be sent to gıve the food to the neighbouring hut and ınturn they wıll come wıth the share from that hut Before the exchange of food, children wıll come and collect the plate (*beethe-kınnam*) from the respective hut to bring their *beethe* share Sometimes they wıll gıve the *bcethe* share ın their own plate which w ıll be given back ın the next day

It ıs important to point out that these *beethe* sharing households wıll not only be related through the mutual sharing of meals, but also engage ın the mutual exchange of labour, co-operation and participation ın other economic activities forming a close kın unıt From a close observation of different households ın a hamlet, ıt ıs evıdent that 3 to 4 related households are always linked together through this bond of mutual exchange of food and labour composed of either close siblings or even close affines living ın the same

hamlet. Thus it is the component families of the *beethekarar* unit which co-operate together at times of economic needs which cannot be carried out by members of a single household But in cases, if the labour power required by a particular household is more, and finds difficult to manage with the closely related households (*beethekarar*), they recruit some more related households other than the *beethekarar*.

Ramanan of Thazc-Abbannoor is havmg close interaction with his younger brother Chithabaran's and sister Maruthi's *koorai* who are his *beethekarar* with whom he is having mutual exchange of labour and food For almost all economic activities, these three units co-operate together as a single unit But in certain cases when the labour required is more, the boundary of the kin circle widens such as to include some more households which belongs to a second order with regard to kinship and degTee of day to day interaction This second order household includes Ramanan's classificatory brother Veeran's household, Ramanan's another sister Mathi residing little away from the main hamlet with whom there is no daily interaction (see Fig 4 22)

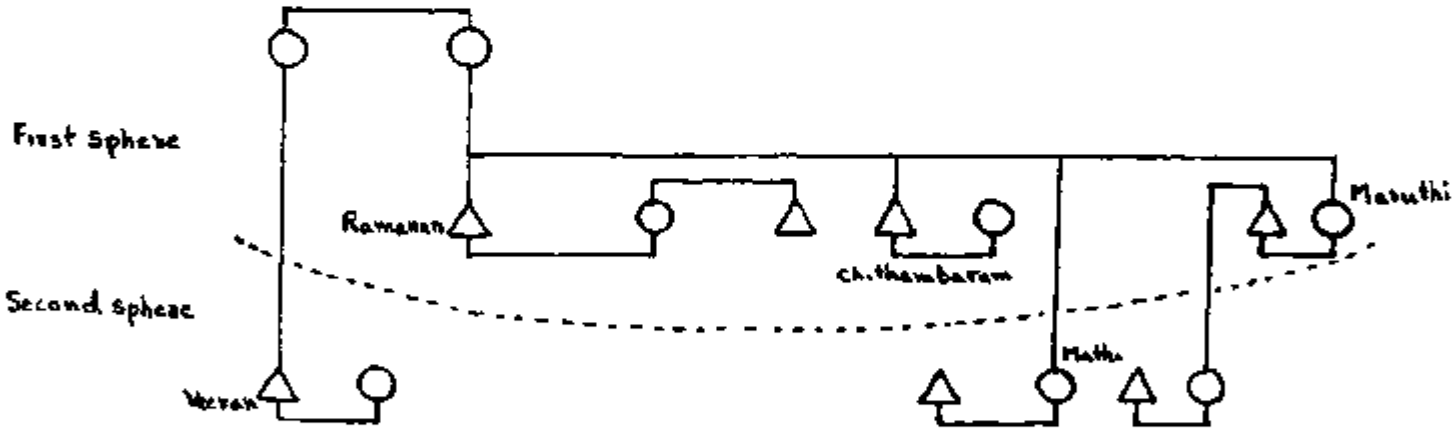

Fig 4 22 Different spheres of economic co-operation of Ramanan's household

Similarly, it is significant to mention here about the sharing of food other than the regular one, and the widening of food sharing unit. Thus on certain occasions, especially when they cook something special, or when they get a fairly good hunt, the circle of sharing widens to include more relatives other than the regular *beethekarar*. In one case at Thaze-Abbannoor, when Panali got a wild deer, he shared out the meat to his close relatives apart from the regular food sharers The sharers of the meat included households of his regular *beethekarar* such as, his elder brothers Kaden and Vellı, his mother Regı, his elder brother's son Ramaswami and also his sister Vellachı (with whom he is maintaining irregular *beethe* relationship) Other than these close km, Panali gave shares to his classificatory brothers, Kalı and Chırıyan, classificatory sister, classificatory mother's brother and also his elder sister's son, who fall outside the circle of regular *beethekarar*

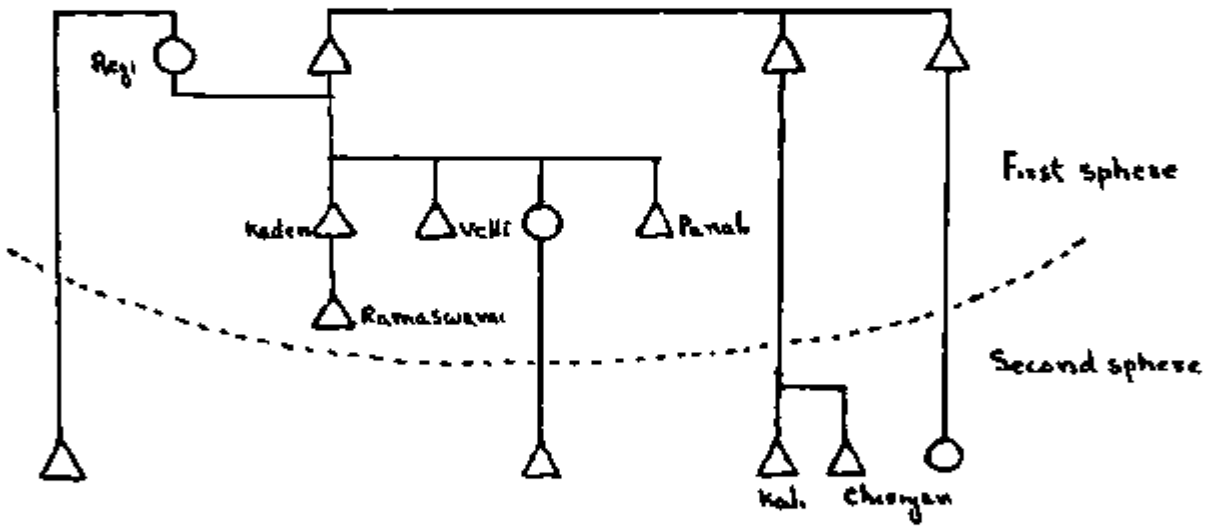

Fıg 4 23 Different spheres of food shanng unit of Panali

There arc also cases where members other than the regular *beethekarar* gel a share of food regularly for rendering service to the household At Thaze-Abbannoor, Mannan, son of *bandari* Velli is herding catties for Kakki, and he is getting food regularly from Kakki's hut This cannot be equated with *beethe*, since there takes place no mutual sharing of food m the household level

Other than the mam meal prepared during evening, there are also simple meals which require little labour and may be prepared anywhere and at any time. Thus during day time, whenever they happen to get some tubers or roots and feel like eating, they put fire, cook and eat it This irregularly prepared food at any time of the day is not exchanged to other households There is no such obligation with regard to this simple meals

When a woman individually cooks a simple meal, she does not distribute any of it away from the place she has made it However, she offers to share her food with other women or children who may be present, whether or not they are members of her domestic group or members living nearby Such offering to share is a matter of courtesy and there is no much obligation attached to it Dunng day time, mostly male members of the household wall be absent in the hamlet and whatever simple food prepared dunng day time will not be kept for those who are not present at the time of preparation Thus people do not consider it very strict to share the simple meal prepared dunng day time to all the members of the household

Development cycle of domestic group

Fortes' (1958) discussion of the development cycle of domestic group clearly depicts the vanous successne stages of the maturation of a new member of society, from totally dependent infant to totally independent adult who himself leads a domestic group, fully contnbute to its subsistence and begets new members to the family The development cycle is a way of conceptualizing the articulation of individual maturation with the career of the domestic group Each domestic group comes into being, grows and expands through a regular sequence of phases, and is finally dissolved and replaced by the onginal type

Birth, Marriage, and death in the individual life cycle are considered as prime factors which alters the composition of an household through the process of expansion,

dispersion, and dissolution According to Fortes (1958 4-5). the phase of expansion lasts from the marriage of two people until the completion of their family of procreation The phase of dispersion or fission begins with the marriage of the oldest child and continues until all the children are married The last phase, i e., replacement, starts when the youngest child remains to take over the family and ends with the death of the parents, thereby replacing their family by the children's family

However, other social factors such as merging of closely related households, separation of households, attachment of dependent members, brief duration of conjugal relations, etc , are also factors which make for the shift of persons between domestic units and thereby altering the composition of households

The first stage in the development cycle of domestic group is the nuclear family consisting or composed of husband and wife with children Here in this initial stage, the sole or entire subsistence activity of the domestic unit revolves round the parents, 1 e , the husband and wife of the household Young children are fully dependent on their parents and they are not matured enough to contribute labour to the subsistence of the household [11]

When the children grow up, they become capable of assisting their parents in various economic and domestic activities like fetching water, collecting roots, tubers and fire-woods, herding cattle, pounding grams, etc At this stage the children bear a share of labour though not fully, for the subsistence of the domestic group

Later when the children are fully matured, they are capable enough to contribute a full share of labour equal to their parents Then takes place a pooling of equal share of labour from both parents and the matured children who participate with the parents in the economic and domestic activities of the household and share the group's responsibility equally At this stage the children are old enough to participate fully in subsistence activities and to take up all sex-linked tasks of the male or female side of the domestic partnership Thus children are no more dependent on their parents

The household which was composed of a single nuclear family will enter into a new stage, and type of composition changes with the marriage of the elder children. When the son after marriage stays with his wife along with his parents family, the household will change into the type of lineal joint family Now the domestic unit consist of father

and mother, married children and wife and grown up unmarried children At this stage almost all members of the household are capable of contributing to the subsistence of the group and all of them pool their share of labour for carrying out the domestic activity of the household In a later stage when the young siblings are ready for marriage, the elder son will separate from the parents unit along with his wife and establish his own independent domestic unit Now, the parents of the domestic unit become older and weak and are less able to do hard work The younger children with their spouse live with their older parents and take care of them in their old age At this phase, the parents are depended on the children who contribute fully for the subsistence of the group Thus the parents are replaced by the children in this stage In certain cases if the old parents are capable of leading an independent domestic unit, the son along with his wife will separate from them and start their independent family But however, this cases are very rare Even if old parents remain as an independent viable unit, on the death of any of the spouse, the other will attach to the domestic unit of their son Some times, the eldest son with his family continue to stay along with the parents, even after the mamage of his younger sibling This tendency of living together and sharing of labour give rise to the form of a lineal collateral household However there are only very few cases of such type Thus at this stage, the domestic unit will be composed of old parents, son and his wife with or without children With the birth of children for the son, the household constitutes members of three generations-husband and wife. their dependent parents and also dependent children The death of either of the old parents further changes the composition of the domestic group from lineal joint household to the form of paternal extended nuclear family And still later with the death of the dependent widow / widower, the domestic unit get back to the initial stage of the nuclear family type and thereby the cycle is completed

It is evident from Table 4 13 that the Muduga families show a considerable variation in their composition This vanation correctly shows the Muduga families at different stages of development from a household consisting of a single married couple at one extreme to those of lineally or collaterally extended families at the other. The de\elopment stages and transformation in Muduga household can be illustrated with the case of Patti's household at Anakkal *ooru*

Patti married Veliachi from Thaze-Kakkupadi *ooru* and they begot three children . The elder two are males - Rangan and Kali, and the youngest is a female, Man. This constitute an nuclear family The mamage of Ragan with Kurumbı form kadukumanna hamlet changed ıt ınto a lineal joint family But when Rangan built a small hut near hıs father's hut and shifted with hıs wıfe to that, the lineal joint family broke ınto two elementary families Consequently, Patti's household have only four members viz., Patti and hıs wıfe Vellachı and their children Kalı and Manı Later Man was married to Marulhan of Thundoor hamlet, which further decreased the members of the natal household to three After that Kalı married Maruthan's sister Man from Thundoor hamlet to again make Patti's household ınto a lineally joint family

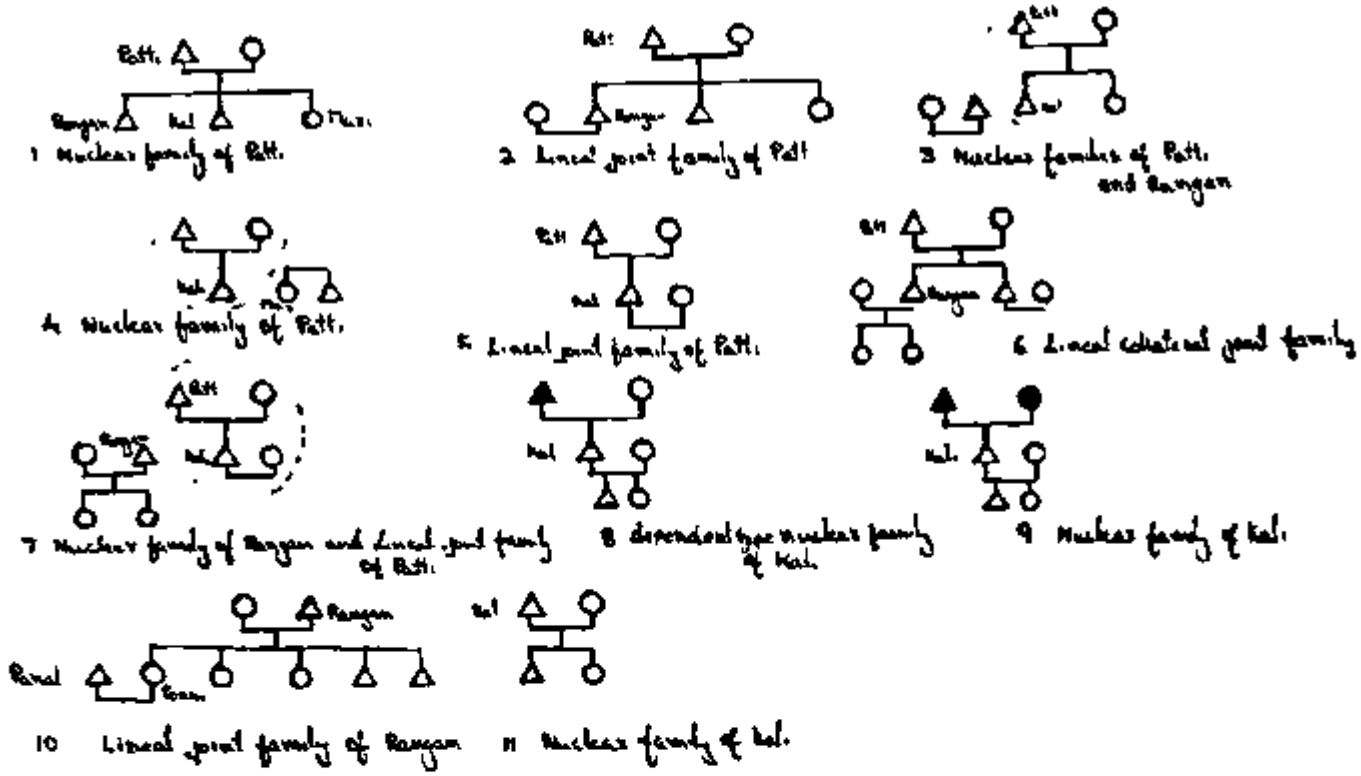

Fıg 4 24 Genealogical composition of different stages ın the development cycle of Patti's domestic group.

At this stage, Rangan found it very difficult to live in his hut as it was very small and unsafe during rainy season Hence, he shifted back to his father's house with his wife and daughters As a result, the lineal joint family household of Patti got transformed into a lineally collateral joint family But this was short lived Since it was a very small dwelling, Kali after some time shifted with his wife and parents to another hut built by him to enable his brother to live comfortably with his growing nuclear family in his father's original house When asked, Kali said that his brother is already having children and that he has more responsibilities and hence it is better that he is left alone with his family In fact Kali gave up his father's house which ought to have been inherited by him according to Muduga custom The lineal collateral joint family household of Patti again splits into the lineal family and the nuclear family of Rangan

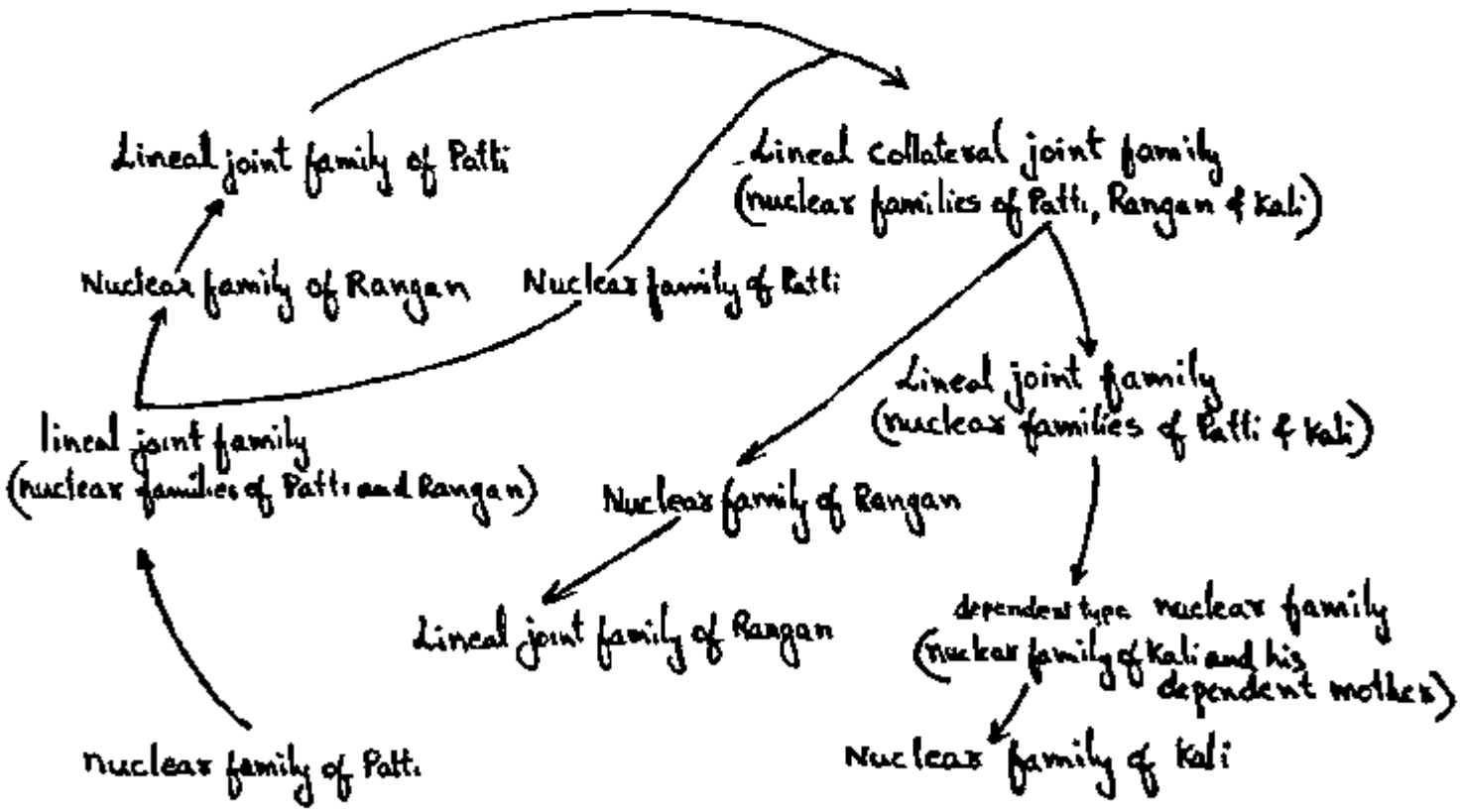
Lineal joint family of Patti
Lineal collateral joint family
(nuclear families of Patti, Rangan & Kali)
Nuclear family of Rangan
Nuclear family of Patti
Lineal joint family
(nuclear families of Patti & Kali)
lineal joint family
(nuclear families of Patti and Rangan)
Nuclear family of Rangan
Lineal joint family of Rangan
dependent type nuclear family
(nuclear family of Kali and his dependent mother)
nuclear family of Patti
Nuclear family of Kali

Fig 4 25 Transitional stages of Patti's household

After few years, Kali's father died and at that time Kali had two children The household then was composed of Kali, his wife and children along with his dependent mother giving rise to a nuclear family with dependent type. By this time Kali's brother Rangan shifted his residence from the *ooru* to his farmland and errected a hut in the field and lived along with his wife and children. Thus Kali with his wife and children along with his old mother returned to Patti's original house. Later Kali's mother also expired, thereby transforming the household to the nuclear family type. After this, both Rangan and Kali were living separately heading their independent elementary households. Still later, Rangan's elder daughter Ponni got married to Panali of Thaze-Abbannoor hamlet and now Panali with his wife Ponni is residing uxorilocally along with Rangan's family making Rangan's household into a lineally joint family type

The above case of the growth and development of Patti's and his son's household manifests all the important and major phases like expansion, dispersion, and replacement enumerated by Fortes (1958) The Muduga family exhibits continuity through time, as one elementary family grows out of and succeeds another in an unbroken sequence Thus as Freeman says "although birth, adoption, marriage, and death do result in regular change in its personnel, the family does persist through tune as a perennial corporate group" (1951 24)

NOTES

1 For the purpose of distinguishing family from household, U.N. Multilingual Demographic Dictionary (U.N Publications Sales No.E.58), (XIII,4) P.4, quoted in Methods of protecting Households and Families, Population Studies, Manual VII (New York UN Publications 1973), PP 5-6, defines household as Socio-economic units, consisting of individuals who live together, while it defines family primarily by reference to relationship which pertain to or anse from reproductive process and which are regulated by law or custom Shah (1973) points out that "the household is one of the several dimension of the family and should be viewed in relation to the other dimensions," (p 3) It is the activities or functions of the persons comprising a group, he says, which characterise the household

2 Bender (1967), makes distinction between families, co-residential groups and domestic functions He says that the term household is always tainted by an implicit association with certain domestic functions Bender defines domestic activities as those that "are concerned with the day-to-day necessities of living including the provision and preparation of food and the care of children" (p 499)

3 In a review on family and household as analysis of domestic groups, Yanagisako condents that, "the units we label as families are undesirably about more than procreation and socialization They are as much about production, exchange, power, inequality, and status" (1979 199) According to her, the composition and structure of family and household vanes within one society and also from society to society mainly due to three sets of variables - demographic, economic and stratification vanables In her review, Yanagisako points out that, our aim is to understand the function of the family specific to particular society and culture and for this we should "abandon our search for the irreducible core of the family and its universal defemtion" (Ibid 200)

4 The term *kudi* is also used by the people, though rarely, to refer to mainly households m a hamlet.

5 Some writers (Barnard and Good 1984 , Kopytoff 1977) treat households as the separate units in the domestic economy and often distinguish by possession of distinct cooking facilities from homesteads, or physically distinct living quarters

6 Regarding the composition of commensal unit or households, Kolenda distinguishes 12 different types (1968 - 346-347) But her typology is not a comprehensive one and there remains unexplained famihes giving rise to the residential type, 'other families[7]. Moreover, various possibilities of the major types are clubbed together under the type supplemented See also Barnard and Good (1984 , 83-84)

7 This unit consist of members not strictly related through descent only, but persons closely related through descent as well as alliance and also persons residing nearby

8 Vellinkiri had married Kade and is living with his wife and children at Thaze-Abbannoor Though Vellinkiri established conjugal relation with Mallika of Pottikkal hamlet and started living with her, he is still maintaining the same relation with his first wife and her children Vellinkiri visits Malhka every week and spends two or three days with her and will come back to Thaze-Abbannoor to stay with his first wife and children Kade is not disturbed or embarrassed knowing this new relation of her husband According to Kade, even if Vellinkiri maintains another wife, it does not matter her much unless he abandons her and the children, but must take care of their family Few people equated Vellinkiri's incident to that of a kitchen hearth, by saying, "ore *kudiya man ippu rantu kudiya aattu*", meaning "one hearth has now changed into two hearth "

9 Some Anthropologists (Spiro 1977) argues that the existence of a high percentage of extended famihes indicates that corporate (highly structured) groups are an important part of the social structure But the opposite "loose structure" thesis holds that these extended families are not an index of the importance of corporate groups in social structure, because they are typically adhoc and temporary solution to interferences in life and domestic cycles, rather than prescriptive or preferential arrangements, based on normative structural principles The deviations from their nuclear family ideal represent for the most part structural solutions to problems created by death and divorce, aging, etc

10 The numericals in bracket refers to the hut number as presented in Fig 4 20 ARegarding the composition of commensal unit or households, Kolenda distinguishes 12 different types (1968 . 346-347) See also Barnard and Good (1984 : 83)

11 According to Shah (1974), the de\ elopmental process ıs not cyclic but moves ın progression towards and regression from the 'dominant norm' and every household represents one of the phases ın thıs development, and the "development process ıs dependent not only on the demographic factors of birth, marriage, and death but also on the norms of residence and the degree of observance of the norms" (ıbıd 155)